





**THE EPISTLES**  
**OF**  
**PAUL THE APOSTLE**  
**TRANSLATED.**

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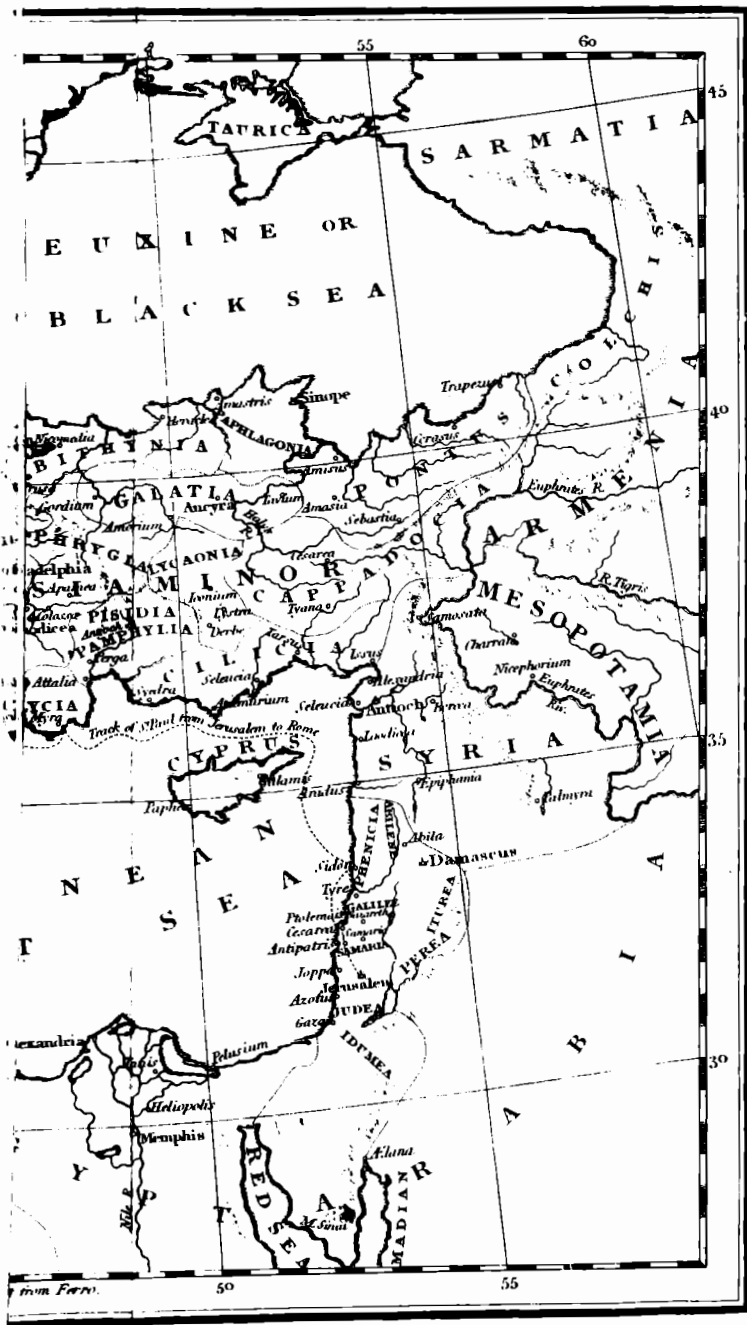
**Vol. I.**



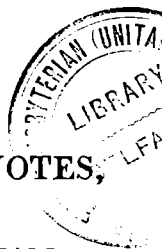








THE EPISTLES  
OF  
PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TRANSLATED,  
WITH  
AN EXPOSITION, AND NOTES,



By THE REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,

MINISTER OF ESSEX-STREET CHAPEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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*" Affert animum rectum et simplicem, veritatis supra cætera amantem,  
" præjudiciis vacuum. Ne protinus tanquam nova, tanquam inaudita et  
" absurda damnaveris, quæ tibi nova, tibi inaudita, et absurda occurrent.  
" Ea quæ dicimus, non cum aliorum judiciis, non cum vulgi inveteratis  
" opinionibus compone, ut inde rem æstimes, sed cum auctoris divini verbis,  
" scopo, ipsoque rationis filo. Hinc tibi veritas petenda est: hinc de nobis  
" ferenda sententia. Equidem nos sicubi lapsi, aut D. Auctoris mentem non  
" satis assecuti sumus, amice admoniti, ultro manus dabimus, gratesque in-  
" super accumulabimus."*

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SLICHTINGIUS Præf. ad Heb.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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WHILE the Author of the following Work officiated as Divinity Tutor in the Academical Institutions at Daventry and Hackney, it was his custom to deliver Lectures on the Epistles of Paul. These Lectures were chiefly critical; and the design of them was to instruct his pupils in Mr. Locke's manner of studying and expounding the Epistles. They were delivered, according to his usual custom, from brief hints and imperfect notes.

When the Institution at Hackney was suspended, and the Author had the honour of being chosen to succeed his venerable friend Dr. Priestley in the pastoral office there, he was anxious to supply to the best

of his ability the loss of his illustrious predecessor ; and, among other methods of instruction, by adopting Dr. Priestley's plan of expounding the Scriptures. This accordingly constituted a regular portion of the morning-service every Lord's day. An Exposition of this kind would of course be of a more popular cast than what he had been accustomed to deliver to his pupils. It included all that appeared necessary for illustrating the sense and analysing the argument of the sacred writer ; it traced out the train of thought and reasoning ; critical remarks were sparingly introduced, and only where they appeared to be indispensably necessary ; and such practical reflections were interwoven as naturally arose from the subject, without a formal introduction of them at the close of every section ; it being the wish of the Author rather to give the whole Exposition a practical turn, than to interrupt the train of ideas and the course of the argument by reflections which, however useful in their place, are not always relevant to the subject.

It was the expressed desire of many of the Author's friends who heard, and of some who read the Exposition<sup>1</sup>, that he would give the Work to the public. Nor was he himself averse from the proposal, considering how very few Expositions of the Scrip-

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<sup>1</sup> *Who read the Exposition.*] Among these was the late Rev. Timothy Kenrick of Exeter; with whom the Author had the honour to be intimately connected for many years in office, in affinity, and, which is of still greater importance, in similarity of sentiment, upon almost every important topic in theology, metaphysics, and morals; and with whom, as long as his life was spared, he held a most confidential and unreserved correspondence upon all those topics which are interesting to man as a reasonable being, formed for immortality. At Mr. Kenrick's request the Expositions were sent to him after being delivered in public: and both the plan and the execution so far met with his approbation, that he not only expressed his wish for the publication, but he commenced an Exposition of the Gospels nearly upon the same plan: which, since his lamented decease (being cut off by a sudden stroke in the midst of health, life, and usefulness), has been published to the world. Excellent as that Exposition is in itself, and most acceptable as it has been to all the friends of piety and rational Christianity, how much more valuable and acceptable would it have been had he lived to complete his plan, and to enrich his Exposition with notes! The Author is happy to announce, that a second edition is in contemplation, which will be greatly enhanced in value by additional corrections and notes by his son the Rev. John Kenrick, M.A. of York; of whose distinguished talents and attainments in theological, as well as in many other branches of literature, there are few scholars who now need to be informed.

tures by Unitarian Divines had lately appeared ; and, more especially, since the Epistles of Paul, as they are usually interpreted, are regarded as the strong holds of Orthodoxy, or rather, of that enormous combination of errors which assumes the name. In furtherance of this design, the Author, repeating the course of his Exposition in public, availed himself of the opportunity of revising and correcting it, of transcribing it for the press, and of adding notes which were judged necessary for justifying either the translation or the paraphrase. He also often inserted the sentiments of learned and pious expositors even where they differed from his own ; that the reader might have an opportunity of selecting the interpretation which he might best approve. In this way the Author had completed and transcribed the translation, commentary, and notes of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, of those from Rome, and of that to the Hebrews, when, in the year 1805, he received an invitation from the Trustees of Essex-street chapel to succeed Dr. Disney in the



office of minister, which invitation he was induced to accept, and to become connected with a Society which he has now had the honour and happiness of serving, upwards of seventeen years.

This change of situation, however, suspended the progress of the Work, and had nearly induced the Author to lay it aside altogether. For the mode of conducting public worship by a Liturgy not easily admitting, at least as he then thought, the introduction of an Exposition of the Scriptures, that custom was discontinued. The Author now thinks differently, and regrets that he did not pursue his original practice. Still, however, he had thoughts of resuming it at a future period: but the Improved Version of the New Testament<sup>1</sup>, under the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Improved Version of the New Testament.*] The Author of the present Work regards it as an honour to have been one of a Committee appointed by the Unitarian Society for publishing the Improved Version of the New Testament. He was indeed the party chiefly concerned in carrying it through the press. He is also responsible for the whole of the Introduction, and for many, perhaps the major part, of the Notes: but whatever credit may be due to the alterations in the Primate's text, to this he can lay but a very limited claim. It having been deter-

auspices of the Unitarian Society, having been published A.D. 1808, and the Author having given up much of his time to that publication, and declining fast into the vale of years, not to mention that many of his leisure hours were occupied with various publications in defence of the common cause, he laid by his papers and relin-

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mined to adopt Archbishop Newcome's text as the basis of the Improved Version, it was his own wish, in no case to have departed from that text, excepting in those instances in which the learned Prelate's predilection for system might be supposed to have given a bias to his Version. Others, however, members of the same Committee, thought differently; and many contributed, some in a greater and others in a less degree, their corrections of the Primate's Version; which corrections were admitted and published. It was, however, agreed, that every variation from the Primate's text should be noted in the margin, and that his own words should be inserted there; that so his character might be protected from every shadow of responsibility for any alteration that was introduced. This rule was invariably observed, except in very few instances, owing to inadvertency, which candour, not indeed always exercised, would readily excuse. This being the state of the case, it is surely no great breach of decorum in the Editors to have given the Work the title of the *Improved Version*, at which some have taken such great offence. No biblical scholar can deny the great superiority of Archbishop Newcome's Version, with all the helps and discoveries of the last two centuries, over that of King James's translators, which was made in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and, for the time in which it appeared, is no doubt excellent, but which makes no pretensions to be either inspired or immaculate.

quished all intention of sending them out into the world.

Nevertheless, being occasionally urged by his partial friends to perform the promise which he had made at a time of life when he had greater confidence in his own powers and qualifications than he now possesses, being also more at leisure from theological controversy, and enjoying a better state of health, and a greater capacity for mental exertion than he was entitled to expect at his advanced period of life, he at length surmounted his reluctance, and undertook to revise his papers for publication : and having been kindly assisted by a young and amiable friend now deceased <sup>1</sup>, in transcribing the remainder, and every objection of a prudential nature being overruled by the great and unexpected liberality of his friends, who volunteered a munificent subscription to a quarto edition, the whole of which they took off his hands,

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<sup>1</sup> *A friend now deceased.*] The much lamented and reverend Thomas Biggin Broadbent, son of the reverend William Broadbent of Warrington.

he engaged to send the Work immediately to the press, and it was hoped that it might have appeared, at the latest, by Christmas, A.D. 1821.

But the Work, upon review, requiring much correction and improvement, and many additional Notes, it was soon discovered that it could not be carried through the press with that celerity which was first expected. The Author being very desirous to render his Work as worthy of the acceptance of his friends and the public as might be in his power, regarded the delay of a few months as nothing in comparison with the benefit which it might derive from his latest corrections and improvements: and, in fact, this delay has afforded him an opportunity of adding at least one-fourth to the Notes, besides numerous corrections of the translation, and many alterations and recompositions of passages in the commentary. He may indeed truly say, that could he have foreseen all the additions and alterations which it has been necessary to introduce, and the time and labour which

it has occupied to bring the Work to its present state, he should have been so intimidated by the prospect, that no consideration would have induced him to undertake to prepare it for the press. But he now thanks God that he has been spared to finish his arduous but pleasing task ; and that this Work was not permitted to go forth into the world in that very imperfect state in which it existed when he first consented to the publication.

The Author has allowed himself in this long personal detail, in order to account, if not to apologize, for the form under which the Work now appears. Having been originally drawn up as a practical paraphrase, to be used in public worship, the commentary is often extended to a much greater length, and comprehends a greater variety of observations and reflections than would be needful, or even allowable, if he had proposed to limit himself to a close and dry expression of the meaning of the text, in the manner of Locke, or Taylor, or Sykes. In fact, Dr. Priestley, of whose in-

teresting method of interpreting the Scriptures from the pulpit he had for some years been an attentive and highly gratified hearer, was, at the beginning at least, more his model than any other expositor.

When, however, the Author determined upon publication, it occurred to him that a body of Notes would be highly requisite for the vindication both of the translation and the exposition; and particularly to show that many interpretations, which to some readers will give offence, and which have the appearance of novelty and singularity, have been advanced, and ably supported, by critics and expositors of high reputation for learning and judgement, and therefore, that they are at least entitled to a candid hearing.

To conclude, in the words of the learned, pious, and venerable Bishop Pearce, “ It may seem no recommendation of the following Work, for the Author to inform his readers that it was drawn up above *thirty* (the Bishop says, *fifty*) years ago, unless at the same time he could inform them, that

it has received some alterations, which he hopes are improvements, as in the advance of his age his judgement increased, and as he met in his reading things worthy of being observed for the purpose. And such as the Work now is he offers it to the public, as what he hopes will make the true meaning of the apostle, in many places of his Epistles, better understood than they have been generally hitherto<sup>1</sup>."

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<sup>1</sup> See the Preface to a New Translation of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, with a Paraphrase and Notes, by Dr. Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, written eight months before his decease. The venerable prelate had kept this Work by him upwards of *fifty* years. He died June 29, 1774, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

*Essex-House, May 31, 1822.*





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## PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

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**T**HE design of the following sheets is to exhibit a clear and distinct view of what appears to the Author to be the true sense and scope of that invaluable portion of the sacred writings, the EPISTLES OF PAUL.

Of these celebrated compositions, it has long ago been remarked by very high authority, that “ they contain many things hard to be understood.” And so greatly and so generally have they been misconceived, and misinterpreted, and so numerous and glaring have been the errors professedly derived from them, that not a few have thrown them aside in despair : and some have rashly presumed to hazard an insinuation, that it might have been as well if the Epistles of Paul had never formed a part of the Sacred Canon. But as no believer in the Christian religion can possibly

deny the conversion and mission of the apostle Paul, so it cannot reasonably be doubted that he was eminently qualified for the important office to which he was appointed; and therefore, that his writings, if genuine, must contain a very important meaning. And the Author of the following Exposition is greatly mistaken indeed, if it should not appear, that these masterly compositions, when studied with diligence and impartiality, and in the way that other ancient writings are, may like them, generally speaking, be well understood; and if, when so understood, they should not be found to comprehend a mass of instruction of the most interesting and useful kind, which will amply reward the labours of the biblical student.

## SECTION I.

*Of a Correct Text.—Fidelity in Translation.  
—Bias of System.*

THE first object of the Author of the present Work has been to attain, as nearly as possible, a *correct text*: and to this end he

has generally adopted the text of the second edition of Griesbach, in whose accuracy and impartiality all biblical critics, of any consideration, are agreed ; and he has, for the most part, carefully noted any material deviation from the received text ; which deviations are indeed, comparatively speaking, not very numerous.

In *translating*, the Author has endeavoured to exhibit the true meaning of the apostle, in plain, simple, and intelligible language : and, with this view, he has made no scruple of availing himself, not only of the words of the Public Version, which are often the best that can be chosen, but of all other versions to which he has had access, whether those of Pearce or Chandler, of Doddridge or Worsley, of Newcome or Wakefield, or any other which have fallen in his way ; not even excepting the Liberal Translation of Dr. Harwood, which, though generally affected and in bad taste, sometimes hits upon a happy phrase. So that the Translation here offered to the public might perhaps with greater propriety be called an Eclectic, or Select Version, than a *new* one. And, in very many instances, after having introduced into the text the

word which was judged preferable, the translations of other critics have been given in the Notes, leaving the reader to his own judgement in the selection.

Where a word in the original is ambiguous, it is right, if possible, to translate it by a word which has the *same* ambiguity, and not to make that definite which the original leaves indefinite : but where an expression occurs which, being ambiguous in the original, does not admit of ambiguity in the translation, but must be rendered by a word of definite signification, the Author does not hesitate to avow that in such cases, where the context does not supply the meaning, he is governed in his choice by the *analogy of faith*, or, in other words, by what he apprehends to be the genuine doctrine of the sacred writer ; presuming that it is quite impossible that the apostle should contradict himself<sup>1</sup>. This principle has been ex-

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<sup>1</sup> “ I have looked into it with care,” says the candid and learned Bishop Watson in a Letter to the Duke of Grafton, who had made him a present of a copy of the Improved Version, “ and have met within it what I expected, and what indeed must ever accompany all translations, many places in which the sense of the author still remains ambiguous. Murphy’s translation of Tacitus differs from Gordon’s, though both these writers were free from the

claimed against by unthinking persons, as a corrupt warping of the text from attachment to system. But to act otherwise is impossible; and those who have boasted most of their impartiality have failed in the attempt. Least of all can the Public Version pretend to perfect freedom from this bias. Nor are King James's translators, nor any other, to be censured on this account. No doubt, all believe their own system to be the true doctrine of the apostles: and when they come to a passage which must be translated in a sense favourable or unfavourable to their own system, they will, and ought to translate it in the favourable sense, which must necessarily appear to them to be the true sense. Who can blame a Trinitarian for translating 'Titus ii. 13, "the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ?"' Who can condemn an Arian for rendering Heb. i. 4, "being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they?"' And who ought to take offence at a Unitarian

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bias of preconceived opinions, which must almost necessarily occupy the minds of translators of the New Testament." Bishop Watson's *Life*, p. 492.

because he prefers “the church of *the Lord* (Acts xx. 28), which he has purchased with his own blood,” a reading supported by all the best manuscripts, to “the church of *God*,” &c. which is only supported by the modern copies of the Vulgate, and by the Æthiopic, which is avowedly corrupted from the Vulgate<sup>1</sup>? Being, therefore, decidedly convinced, that the SIMPLE HUMANITY of Jesus Christ is the clear indis-

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<sup>1</sup> See Improved Version *in loc.*; also Griesbach, ed. 2. *in loc.*; and Bishop Marsh’s Michaelis, vol. ii. p. 96.

As a further illustration of the observation we may refer to 1 Cor. xi. 10: “For this cause ought a woman to have power (a veil) on her head, (*δια τῶν ἀγγέλων*) because of the *angels*.” The word, though ambiguous in the original, must be rendered definitely in the translation: viz. either *angels*, in allusion to the supposed presence of celestial beings in places of worship; or, *messengers*, in reference to the custom of sending a deputation from the assemblies of the men to those of the women.

A much more important case occurs Heb. i. 4, which in the Public Version is rendered, “being made so much better than the angels:” a translation which expresses the superiority of Christ to celestial spirits, as the text is commonly understood.—Mr. Wakefield’s version, instead of *angels*, renders the words *those messengers*: i. e. the prophets of the old dispensation, alluded to in the context, ver. 1. The original is *ambiguous*; it expresses both senses. The translation is necessarily *definite*, there being no English word which has the same ambiguity. Every one, therefore, is induced to translate according to what he believes to be the true sense of the writer: that is, according to his own system of belief. And neither party is to blame.

putable doctrine of the New Testament, the Author makes no hesitation in avowing that he translates passages which admit equally of two senses, in that which is most favourable to this plain and important doctrine: exactly as Dr. Doddridge and the authors of the Public Version translate with a bias favourable to the deity of Christ; or as Dr. Chandler and Dr. Harwood translate with a prepossession in favour of Arianism. To pretend the contrary would be folly and affectation: and the Author hopes that he shall meet with the same candour and indulgence in this respect as his Arian and Trinitarian predecessors. In fact, to be destitute of a bias of this kind is both undesirable and unavoidable: for what must we think of the translation of an author by one who professes that he does not understand his general scope and design? and if he does understand it, how is it possible for him to avoid paying regard to it, in giving the sense of an ambiguous passage? Translators are then only to be censured when, through the bias of system, they are induced to give a turn to the translation which the original does not warrant.

It has been already observed, that where

the original is ambiguous the translation ought, if possible, to be alike ambiguous ; and that it is only under the circumstance of a necessarily definite translation of an ambiguous original, that the bias of a correct translator will appear. In Exposition the case is altered. The expositor professes to give what he sincerely believes to be the true meaning of his author, and to explain passages which the author himself has left ambiguous. This has been attempted in the following Exposition, in which the Author has, to the best of his judgement, in every instance, given what he conscientiously believes to be the true sense of the apostle, without pretending to infallibility, and leaving it to his reader to determine how far his interpretation is just.

## SECTION II.

### *Inspiration of the Epistles.*

FROM the history of Luke, and from the testimony of his own epistles, it appears evident that the apostle Paul was a man of



great zeal and unblemished integrity ; who, having been educated in all the superstitions, and in all the rigour of the Pharisaic discipline, and having been originally a cruel persecutor of those who believed in Jesus, had been converted to the faith by a miraculous appearance of Christ to him on the road to Damascus, whither he was going with authority from the chief priests to raise a persecution against the believers in that populous city. Having been chosen and appointed by Christ to be his apostle, and to preach his gospel to the Gentiles, immediately after his conversion he went into Arabia, where he resided two years, during which period he was favoured with personal intercourse, more or less, with Christ himself, and was by him fully instructed in the whole doctrine and scheme of the gospel, and in the nature and duties of the apostolic office, and particularly of his mission to the Gentiles : he was also endowed with a large portion of the gifts of the holy spirit, and with that privilege in particular which was peculiar to the apostles, the power of communicating spiritual gifts to the new converts : so that, as he himself declares, he was not behind the very chief of the

apostles. See Gal. i. ii. 2 Cor. xi. xii. In addition to this, it appears that the apostle was favoured with occasional interviews with Christ, and revelations from him during the course of his ministry, and that in his various missionary journeys he shaped his course not only under the general superintendence, but occasionally under the immediate direction of Christ himself. See Acts xiii. 2, xvi. 6—9, xviii. 9, 1 Thess. iii. 11. From all these circumstances, it may be justly concluded, that the apostle carried in his mind at all times, in all places, and to the end of life, a complete and infallible knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, so that whatever he taught, or wrote, upon that subject is to be received as true, and as of divine authority; nor is it of the least consequence to ascertain whether that which he delivers be in any other sense inspired. For the doctrine which had been revealed to the apostle by Christ in Arabia, and which he could never forget, is as truly divine, as if it were communicated at the instant by the immediate inspiration of God. The same observation will apply to prophecy, which the apostle either spoke, or wrote. The prediction is equally of divine autho-

riety, whether it were originally revealed to the apostle by Christ in Arabia, or supernaturally suggested to his mind at the instant of his dictating an epistle to the Thesalonians, or to Timothy. Whether it were the one, or the other, it is not always easy to distinguish, nor in the least degree material. Whatever the apostle teaches as Christian doctrine, whatever he announces as dictated by the spirit of prophecy, must be received as such by all who admit the claim of Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Whether *revealed* or *inspired*, the authority is the same <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The vulgar and loose idea of inspiration which regards every sentence of the Old and New Testament as an inspired aphorism, must be abandoned by every one who allows himself to reason justly upon this subject: inspiration, that is, the supernatural communication of truth to the mind, being a miracle, is not to be admitted in any case but upon the clearest evidence. The apostles by their miracles exhibited the most satisfactory proofs that they were divinely instructed and authorized to teach the doctrine of Christ; whatever, therefore, they advance as such, must be received as a revelation from heaven. When the apostle Paul announces to the Athenians that "God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained," or, when he teaches the Corinthians that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," he speaks with authority; he is to be received as a messenger of God: he teaches what he could only learn from inspiration or revelation. Inspiration teaches with a tone of authority: "Thus saith the Lord," &c. Reasoning is an appeal to

Further than this the claim to inspiration does not extend. There is no reason to be-

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the understanding: "Judge ye what I say." Whoever appeals to reason waves, *quoad hoc*, his claim to inspiration. Still the doctrine may be from heaven, while the argument is inconclusive. That believing Gentiles were admitted to equal privileges with believing Jews, was a revealed truth. That all the arguments used by the apostle Paul in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians to establish this principle were inspired, or even that they were all conclusive, cannot reasonably be maintained.

Upon the whole, an approved prophet, or an apostle, is to be received as inspired, or divinely instructed, First, when he asserts it; Secondly, when he utters a prophecy; Thirdly, when he speaks authoritatively upon the subjects of his mission, viz. the mission of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgement, &c.

If it be inquired, How is it to be known when a prophet or an apostle is speaking upon the subject of his mission? the answer is, From his own declaration, or the nature of the subject, the scope of the context, or the circumstances of the case. These considerations will generally lead to a right conclusion. But if error be involuntarily adopted after using the best means of information, it may be safely concluded that such error will not be imputed as a crime.

These or similar views of inspiration were favoured by Erasmus and Grotius; they were published by Le Clerc in his celebrated Five Letters upon the subject; and the most important of them have been supported by many eminent divines both in and out of the Established Church.

Erasmus says, "*Non est necesse ut quicquid fuit in apostolis, protinus ad miraculum vocemus. Passus est errare suos Christus, etiam post acceptum paracletum, sed non usque ad fidei periculum.*" *Erasmi Epist.* lib. ii. tom. 3. ed. Basil. Grotius has the following passage in his *Vot. pro pace Eccles.* tom. iii. p. 672, ed. Lond. 1679, fol.: "*A spiritu sancto dictari historias nihil fuit opus, satis fuit scriptorem memoriâ valere.*" Le Clerc divides the sacred writings into three classes, prophecies, histories,

lieve that the apostle was inspired to write a certain number of epistles and no more,

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and doctrines : in the first he admits inspiration, in the two last he absolutely denies it. Vid. *Sentimens de quelques Theologiens Hollandois*, Lett. 11, 12. See Marsh's Notes upon Michaelis, ch. iii. sect. i. note 10, vol. i. p. 379.

"It is possible," says Michaelis, "to doubt and even to deny the inspiration of the New Testament, and yet be fully persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion; and many really entertain these sentiments, either publicly or in private, to whom we should render great injustice if we ranked them in the class of unbelievers." Marsh's Michaelis, vol. i. p. 72. "Had the Deity inspired not a single book of the New Testament, but left the apostles and evangelists without any other aid than that of natural abilities to commit what they knew to writing, admitting their works to be authentic, and possessed of a sufficient degree of credibility, the Christian religion would still remain the true one." Michaelis, *ibid.* p. 72. Upon which Bishop Marsh remarks, "Here our author makes a distinction, which is at present very generally received, between the divine origin of the Christian doctrine, and the divine origin of the writings in which that doctrine is recorded." *Ibid.* p. 379.

"The wisdom contained in the Epistles of Paul," says the late learned Dr. Powell of Cambridge, Master of St. John's College, "was given him from above, and very probably the style and composition were his own."

"He is changed at once from a declared enemy to a teacher of our religion. But how did he learn the doctrines which he undertook to teach? Let him answer for himself. I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal. i. 16. The doctrines of Christianity and his appointment to be a preacher of it were immediately revealed to him; or, as the same thing may be otherwise expressed, his knowledge of them was inspired. For there seems to be no intelligible distinction between original revelation and inspiration: whether we say that the new doctrines were revealed

or, that he was prompted by immediate divine suggestion to write every, or any one,

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or inspired, the meaning is exactly the same. They whose understandings were furnished by the holy spirit with more than human knowledge were inspired: they who committed such knowledge to writing made inspired books."

"The natural faculties of the human mind enable it to retain the knowledge it has once acquired, especially if that knowledge be clear and important. None could be more important, or more justly claim attention, than the suggestions of the holy spirit. But as long as the memory retained the divine communications, so long did the inspiration continue; and this we may presume was usually as long as the apostle lived.—But this wisdom consisted not in enticing words of human device. Of whatever kind the language be, it probably had no other source than the natural abilities of the writers. The form and character of St. Paul's Epistles we shall find to have been derived from the circumstances of his early life." "It has been said that the holy spirit suggested not only the religious wisdom, but every sentence and word which the sacred writers delivered: this can never be proved. And could it be proved that the holy scriptures were thus dictated, it does not appear that any important conclusions would be deducible from it. That which is important is also clear: whatever be thought of the colouring, the substance of these writings was from heaven." Dr. Powell's Sermons, No. xv.

"The difficulty," says Dr. Paley, "which attends the subject is contained in this question: If we once admit the fallibility of the apostolic judgement, where are we to stop, or in what can we rely upon it? To which question, as arguing with unbelievers, and as arguing for the substantial truth of the Christian history, and for that alone, it is competent to the advocate of Christianity to reply, Give me the apostles' testimony, and I do not stand in need of their judgement."

"But I do not think this the only answer of which the objection is capable. The two following cautions will

of the epistles which are now extant: he puts in no claim to inspiration in his reasonings, in his illustrations, in his narratives of fact, in his typical and figurative arguments from the Old Testament, in his application of scripture language, in his in-

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exclude all uncertainty which can be attended with danger:

"First, to separate what was the object of the apostolic mission, and declared by them to be so, from what was extraneous to it, or only incidentally connected with it." The learned writer illustrates this by the case of demoniacal possessions; in which "the malady was real, and the cure was real, whether the popular explication of the cause was well founded or not."

"Secondly, that in reading the apostolic writings we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation properly so called; yet in propounding these doctrines they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them by such analogies, arguments, and considerations, as their own thoughts suggested. The doctrine itself must be received; but is it necessary, in order to defend Christianity, to defend the propriety of every comparison, or the validity of every argument, which the apostle has brought into the discussion?"

"When divine writers," says Bishop Burnet (*Expos. Art. 6*), "argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out, or even to assent to, all the premises made use of by them in their whole extent, unless it appear plainly, that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them." *Paley's Evid. of Christ.* vol. ii. p. 301—305. Dr. Priestley also has some excellent observations on Inspiration in the *Theol. Repos.* vol. iv.

terpretations of the sacred writings, in his appropriation of Jewish prophecy. In all these cases the apostle speaks and writes as any other person of similar abilities and information would in similar circumstances, with similar habits and prepossessions: and his writings are to be examined, discussed, and discriminated, like those of any other author; with the same freedom and the same candour.

This way of considering and treating the apostolic writings emancipates the mind from the bondage in which it is held by the popular but unfounded supposition, that every epistle was written by a divine suggestion, and that every sentence in every epistle, and every word in every sentence, was dictated by the holy spirit. Under these circumstances, in which the author is nothing but the passive instrument of the holy spirit, the expositor finds himself under the hard but imperious necessity of justifying every fact, every doctrine, every argument, every proposition, and every expression. Whereas, upon a rational and judicious theory of inspiration, ample provision is made for the support of the apostle's authority in every case in which it



can be necessary, while at the same time sufficient scope remains for liberal and candid criticism. Upon this principle, an Expositor will not feel himself bound to warp and strain a text from its plain and obvious meaning, because that meaning is erroneous, and to adopt some unusual and far-fetched interpretation in order to reconcile it to truth, because at all events the proposition must be justified; but he will endeavour to find out the true meaning of the author according to the established and approved rules of interpretation, leaving the whole responsibility, whether for the sense, the truth, or the reasoning of the passage, upon the author himself, without any pain for the result; being justly confident that, whatever error may be discovered, it will not be of such a nature as to diminish any reasonable confidence in his authority as an apostle of Christ, and an authorized missionary of the Christian religion.

In this way, both the reader and the expositor of the writings of Paul will acquire an interest, both in the author and his Works, far beyond what it would be possible to feel if the writer were considered merely as the organ of the holy spirit.—

When the language of the apostle is understood as the natural and unaffected expression of his own thoughts, views, and feelings, in the very extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed, and in the arduous and hazardous ministry with which he was charged, it gives a life, a spirit, a raciness, to his compositions, which they would not otherwise possess ; it inspires an interest in them which it would be impossible to excite in any other way, and renders these Epistles the most impressive, as well as the most important, of any that were ever written or dictated by man.

### SECTION III.

*Obscurity of the Epistles of Paul.—Mr. Locke's Method of investigating their true Meaning.—Dr. Taylor's Key.*

IN his Exposition of the Epistles, and in the investigation of the true meaning of the apostle, the Author of the following Commentary has followed the judicious advice and the excellent example of Mr. Locke,

whose solidity and correctness of judgment, and whose comprehension of mind, are no less conspicuous, in his 'Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of Paul,' than in his celebrated 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' and his admirable publications in defence of Civil and Religious Liberty<sup>1</sup>. Discarding all attention to the modern divisions of the Epistles into chapters and verses, which are of themselves sufficient to envelop the most perspicuous writer in confusion and obscurity<sup>2</sup>, and persuaded that

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<sup>1</sup> *Religious Liberty.*] See Mr. Locke's *Essay for the understanding St. Paul's Epistles by consulting St. Paul himself*. "That great man," says the late Bishop Watson, speaking of Locke, "has done more for the enlargement of the human faculties, and for the establishment of pure Christianity, than any author I am acquainted with." *Life of the Bishop of Llandaff*, p. 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Confusion and obscurity.*] Among the "causes which keep us from an easy and assured discovery of St. Paul's sense," Mr. Locke mentions "the dividing the epistles into chapters and verses, whereby they are so chopped and minced, and as they are now printed stand so broken and divided, that not only the common people take the verses usually as distinct aphorisms, but even men of more advanced knowledge, in reading them, lose very much of the strength and of the force of the coherence, and the light that depends upon it. These divisions also have given occasion to the reading of these epistles by parcels and in scraps . . . and I doubt not that every one will confess it to be a very unlikely way to come to the understanding of any other letters to read them piccemeal, a bit to-day, another scrap to-morrow, and so on by broken intervals." *Locke's Works*, vol. iii. p. 277, 278.

no person in the apostle's situation would write or dictate epistles of considerable length to churches, or to individuals, without meaning to convey important instruction in language that would be intelligible and impressive, his first concern, agreeably to Locke's advice, was, by careful and repeated perusal of the apostle's Letter, to discover his main object and design, and then to trace the method by which he effected his purpose.

With this view, it was necessary that the Author should make himself familiar with the apostle's style ; so as to be able to pursue his thoughts through their various divisions and ramifications ; to mark the nature of his transitions, often very pertinent when apparently most abrupt ; to notice his long parentheses, his frequent personifications, his various digressions, and his method of returning to the subject in hand, sometimes after a long interval ; and the application of his observations to the case of which he is treating, which shows that he had never lost sight of the question, and that he was not the loose and rambling writer which many imagine <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Which many imagine.*] "After I found by long expe-

The apostle Paul was a Jew, a Pharisee, who had been educated in the most rigo-

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rience," says Mr. Locke, *ibid.* p. 281, "that the reading of the text and comments in the ordinary way proved not so successful as I wished to the end proposed, I began to suspect that reading a chapter as usual, and thereupon sometimes consulting expositors upon some hard places of it which at that time most affected me, was not a right method to get into the true sense of these epistles. I saw plainly, after I began once to reflect on it, that if any one now should write me a letter as long as St. Paul's to the Romans, concerning such a matter as that is, in a style as foreign, and expressions as dubious, as his seem to be, if I should divide it into fifteen or sixteen chapters, and read of them one to-day, another to-morrow, it was ten to one I should never come to a full and clear comprehension of it. The way to understand the mind of him that writ it, every one would agree, was to read the whole letter through, from one end to the other all at once, to see what was the main subject and tendency of it: or, if it had several views and purposes in it, not dependent one of another, nor in a subordination to one chief aim and end, to discover what those different matters were, and where the author concluded one and began another; and, if there were any necessity of dividing the epistle into parts, to mark the boundaries of them."

"In prosecution of this thought, I concluded it necessary for the understanding of any one of St. Paul's epistles, to read it all through at one sitting, and to observe as well as I could, the drift and design of his writing it. If the first reading gave me some light, the second gave me more; and so I persisted on, reading constantly the whole epistle over at once, till I came to have a good general view of the apostle's main purpose in writing the epistle, the chief branches of his discourse wherein he prosecuted it, the arguments he used, and the disposition of the whole."

Such was the excellent method pursued by this truly great man, who at the same time discarded all attachment

rous observation of the ceremonial law. This gave a cast to his ideas, and a tinge to his language, which always adhered to him. These circumstances led him to invent, as it were, a phraseology of his own, and to use classical words in a sense which they never bear in classical writers. He not unfrequently changes the meaning of his words in the same discourse without giving notice : he sometimes assumes different persons, writes under different characters, states and replies to objections, without giving his reader any hint of the transition. This abruptness in the apostle's style often creates great obscurity, and makes it very difficult to ascertain his meaning. Other difficulties also occur, which are necessary consequences of the epistolary style ; such as allusions to cus-

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to popular system, and sought for nothing in the writings of Paul but what Paul himself intended, making him for the most part his own interpreter. By these means he not only himself exhibited to the public an exposition of these difficult compositions, far more rational and intelligible than any which preceded, but he also supplied succeeding expositors with a clue for the more judicious interpretation of these invaluable writings, of which they have not failed to make use. And if the Epistles of Paul are better understood in the present age than in any which preceded it, this honourable pre-eminence is almost wholly owing to that distinguished philosopher and Christian, John Locke.

toms and manners not now existing, nor well understood; also, to facts and occurrences, both with regard to societies and individuals, which, though perfectly familiar to the writer and his correspondents, are utterly unknown to modern readers, and can only be imperfectly guessed, perhaps from hints incidentally dropped in the epistle itself. Hence arises great and frequent obscurity<sup>1</sup> in the Epistles of Paul,

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<sup>1</sup> *Great and frequent obscurity* ] “Besides the disturbance in perusing St. Paul’s epistles,” says Mr. Locke, “from the plenty and vivacity of his thoughts, the frequent changing of the personage he speaks in renders the sense very uncertain, and is apt to mislead one who has no clue to guide him. Sometimes by the pronoun *I* he means himself, sometimes any Christian; sometimes a Jew, and sometimes any man, &c. His use of the *first person plural* is with a far greater latitude, sometimes designing himself alone, sometimes those with himself whom he makes partners to the epistles; sometimes with himself comprehending the other apostles or preachers of the gospel, or Christians: nay, sometimes in that way he speaks of the converted Jews, other times of the converted Gentiles, and sometimes of others, in a more or less extended sense; every one of which varies the meaning of the place, and makes it to be differently understood.” *Locke’s Works*, vol. iii. p. 277.

“The form and character of St. Paul’s Epistles,” says Dr. Powell, “we shall find to have been derived from the circumstances of his early life. Tarsus, where he was born, was in that age a celebrated seat of learning. The Tarsic eloquence was employed in sudden and unpremeditated harangues; and St. Paul, long accustomed to compositions of this sort, transferred the style and manner from

which can never be perfectly explained ; but which the Author of the following Exposition, to the best of his power, and with the aid of his learned and pious predecessors in the field of investigation, has endeavoured, in his humble measure, to elucidate.

It is after mature consideration that the Author has adopted that theory of interpretation of the Epistles of Paul which was first suggested by Mr. Locke <sup>1</sup>, and afterwards amplified, confirmed, and illustrated, by the late learned and laborious Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, in his celebrated ‘ Key to the Apostolic Writings,’ prefixed to his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans.

The general principle of which theory is, that, the children of Israel, who had been

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speaking to writing. Little solicitous about method, he is often drawn from his design by the accidental use of an expression or a word ; and neither when he quits his purpose nor when he returns to it again, does he employ the usual forms of transition. Sometimes he assumes another person, and introduces a kind of dialogue in which it is not always easy to distinguish who is speaking. Lastly, he abounds with broken sentences, bold figures, and hard far-fetched metaphors.” *Powell’s Sermons*, p. 250.

<sup>1</sup> *Suggested by Mr. Locke.*] See Locke’s long and admirable note upon Rom. v. 6—8 ; where he distinctly but briefly lays down the principles of interpretation afterwards adopted by Dr. Taylor, and so judiciously applied by him in his Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans.



formerly the chosen people of God, having been cast off by him because of their great wickedness, and particularly for their rejection of the Messiah, believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, are now admitted into the same relation to the Deity which the Israelites once held; and those terms which were formerly applied to the state and privileges of the Israelites are now used to express the state and privileges of Christian believers. For example,

The Israelites having been selected by God from all other nations to be his peculiar people, are for that reason said to be *chosen* or *elected*; being placed in a new state of moral existence, they are said to be *created*; being separated from the rest of mankind for the service and worship of the true God, they are *consecrated* or *holy*; having formerly been heathen idolaters, they were then *aliens* and *enemies*; being become worshippers of the true God, they are *reconciled* and *friends*; having been promised an inheritance in Canaan, they are made *sons* and *children* of God; having been recovered from the bondage of Egypt, they are *redeemed*, *delivered*, *purchased*; having been put into possession of Canaan, and favoured

with a divine institute, they are the *servants* and *subjects* of God, in *covenant* with him, and bound by their allegiance to him. On the other hand, God is represented as sustaining the correspondent relations of a *Creator*, a *Redeemer*, a *Saviour*, a *Father*, a *Sovereign*, a *Judge*, a *reconciled* God, and a God in *covenant*. He requires homage, worship, love, confidence, unlimited obedience to his laws and statutes, and, above all things, that they should abstain from idolatry. And upon these conditions he promises to be their protector and friend, to defend them from their enemies, and to continue them in possession of the land of Canaan, and of all the privileges and blessings they enjoy. But on the contrary, if they violate the covenant, if they disobey his law, if they reject his authority, if they swerve into idolatry, he also threatens to disown them as his people, to cast them out of covenant, to visit them with judgements, to expel them from the land of Canaan, and to deliver them over to their enemies.

Now this language applied not so much to the moral conduct and to the personal character of the Israelites, as to their external state, as a community separated by a

peculiar ritual from the rest of the world, consecrated to the service of God, and the main design of which was to support in the world a standing memorial and testimony against idolatry.

But the apostle teaches, that the Jews having rejected Jesus as the Messiah, are therefore themselves as a community rejected by God; they are no longer a holy and peculiar people; they are cast out of covenant, and in a national view they stand upon the same footing as the Gentile world.

He further teaches, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and who rose again, is the true Messiah promised by the prophets, the mediator of a new and better covenant; that Jews and Gentiles are alike invited to enter into its engagements and to accept its blessings; and that all who believe in Jesus as the Messiah, and who enter themselves as members of that community of which he is the head, are introduced into the same state of grace and privilege in which Israel formerly stood, and are entitled to the same honourable distinctions. Believers in Christ are acknowledged as the spiritual Israel; the true people of God, his servants, his children. They are chosen,

holy, redeemed, called, and saved : having once been enemies, they are now reconciled : they are new created, new born. God is their creator, their redeemer, their governor, their father : they are ‘ translated out of darkness into light,’ and ‘ from the kingdom of Satan,’ a state of idolatry, into that ‘ of God’s dear son,’ the Christian community : they are become ‘ fellow-citizens with the saints,’ heirs of the promises and ‘ of the household of God <sup>1</sup>.’

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<sup>1</sup> *Of the household of God.*] “ Certain maxims of interpretation,” says Dr. Paley, “ have obtained authority without reason, and are received without inquiry. One of these is the expecting to find in the present circumstances of Christianity a meaning for, or something answering to, every appellation and expression that occurs in scripture. Or, in other words, applying to the personal condition of Christians at this day those titles, phrases, propositions, and arguments, which belong to the situation of Christianity at its first institution.”

The learned author gives several instances of this misapplication of scripture language : amongst others, that *baptism* and *conversion*, though almost synonymous in the apostolic age, are by no means essentially connected in the present. He adds :

“ The community of Christians were at first a handful of men connected among themselves by the strictest union, and divided from the rest of the world by a real difference of principle and persuasion, and by many outward peculiarities of worship and behaviour. This society, considered collectively, were set apart from the rest of mankind for a more gracious dispensation, as well as actually distinguished by a superior purity of life and conversation. In this view, and in opposition to the unbelieving world,

All these high and honourable titles are applied to them in consequence of their having become members of the Christian community; and do not generally express moral character so much as an external state, a state of privilege and profession, which if they duly improve, they shall obtain the promised blessings, they shall at the appointed season be raised from the grave to a new and endless life: and “when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they

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they were denominated in scripture by terms of great seeming dignity and import: they were *elect, called, saints, in Christ, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people*. That is, these terms were employed to distinguish the professors of Christianity from the rest of mankind, as the names of Greek and Barbarian, Jew and Gentile, distinguish the people of Greece and Israel from other nations. The application of such phrases to the whole body of Christians is now become obscure; and we resort to a sense and an application of them easier, it may be, to our comprehension, but extremely foreign to the design of their authors, to distinguish individuals among the professors of Christianity from one another: agreeably to which idea the most flattering of these names, the *elect, called, saints*, have by bold and unlearned men been appropriated to themselves and their own party, with a presumption and conceit injurious to the reputation of our religion amongst them that are without, and extremely disgusting to the sober part of its professors.”

The learned and pious author further notices the strong expressions used in scripture to express the change from heathenism to Christianity, viz. regeneration, new birth, alive from the dead, a new creation; and goes on to remark, “No such change can be experienced by any one

also shall appear with him in glory." He who reads the Epistles of Paul with attention will plainly see that this is the general meaning of his language. Without this clue it will be almost impossible to understand his admirable writings, but with it there are few passages which do not admit a simple and easy interpretation: or, to say the least, the judicious application of this principle elucidates many passages which would otherwise be involved in inextricable difficulty.

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educated in a Christian country, yet we retain the same language. And what has been the consequence? Some conclude that the expressions only indicate the enthusiasm of their authors. Others understand the phrases as signifying nothing more than a gradual amendment of life and conversation; which degrades too much the proper force of the language. A third sort have imagined certain perceptible impulses of the Holy Ghost, by which in an instant they are regenerated and born of the spirit. If it be said, If such expressions of scripture do not mean this, what do they mean? we answer, They mean NOTHING: nothing, that is, to us: nothing to be found or sought for in the present circumstances of Christianity." *Paley's Caution recommended in the Use and Application of Scriptural Language*, in a Sermon before Bishop Law. *Sermons and Tracts*, p. 63.

## SECTION IV.

*Authenticity of Paul's Epistles.—The irresistible Evidence which they bear to the Truth of the Christian Religion.*

OF the thirteen epistles which bear the name of the apostle Paul, it may truly be said, that there are no writings of equal antiquity, the genuineness of which is so clearly ascertained. The name of the apostle is prefixed to each; and they contain nothing that is unworthy of his character, inconsistent with what is known of his history, or incongruous with his mission. The claim to apostolic authority is indeed amply supported by internal evidence. The subjects upon which these epistles treat, the spirit which they breathe, the tone of authority which they assume, the controversies which they discuss, the ardent zeal for truth which they exhibit, the faith, the fortitude, the patience, the piety, the charity, which they display, the entire devotedness to the cause in which the writer is embarked, the joy in its success, the indigna-

tion against malignant opposers, the grief at the misconduct of professors, and the glorious anticipation of a final triumph, are all in perfect unison with the apostle's character. The incidental allusions to persons, manners, and customs, which existed in the age and country in which the apostle wrote, and the undesigned coincidences<sup>1</sup> and accidental discrepancies with the history of the Acts, and with other portions of the New Testament, are strong confirmations of the genuineness of the epistles.

The genuineness and authenticity of the thirteen Epistles have been admitted without controversy from the earliest age. The learning and inquisitive spirit of Eusebius of Cesarea, who appears to have examined the question thoroughly, could not discover that they had ever been disputed<sup>2</sup>: and citations from these epistles<sup>3</sup> have been made

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<sup>1</sup> *Undesigned coincidences.*] See upon this subject Dr. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*.—This celebrated work exhibits perhaps the best model of reasoning from indirect evidence in this or in any language. Many excellent hints to the same purpose are contained in Hartley's *Observations on Man*, vol. ii. part ii. chap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. c. 24, lib. vi. c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Citations from these epistles.*] For the external evidence of the genuineness of the Epistles of Paul, as well as of the other books of the New Testament, the reader



by ecclesiastical writers from the age of Clement, contemporary and companion of the apostle, to the present day, in every successive generation, more numerous and full than those from any profane author, however celebrated or popular. And these citations are made by men who held very different systems of faith, and who all appeal to the authority of the apostle, and would consequently keep a very vigilant eye upon each other, that no one might corrupt the apostle's text in favour of his own system, even if he should be so disposed. Also, the Epistles of Paul were very early translated into a great variety of languages, and many of these ancient versions are still

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may consult the incomparable Work of Dr. Lardner on the *Credibility of the Gospel History*. This learned and candid writer has completely exhausted the subject, and has brought together a mass of evidence in favour of the Sacred Writings, which will in vain be sought after to establish the genuineness of any profane author. "There are," says Dr. Lardner in his article upon Tertullian, sect. 23, "perhaps more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than of all the works of Cicero, though of such uncommon excellence for thought and style, in writers of all characters for several ages. And there is a like number of quotations of the New Testament, in St. Irenæus and St. Clement of Alexandria, both writers of the second century." Lardner's *Works*, vol. ii. p. 287, Kippis's edition.

extant and agree with our present copies. Many manuscripts of great antiquity are still in existence, some of which are believed to have been written as early as the third or fourth century, and have been found in very different parts of the world. These, within the last century, have been very carefully collated together<sup>1</sup>, and, with a very small number of exceptions, they have been found to agree. It is therefore next to impossible that evidence so various and accumulated should be fallacious. No such evidence can be produced in favour of the Epistles of Cicero or Pliny, of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Carefully collated.*] Dr. John Mill of the University of Oxford had the honour to lead the way in this most laborious and useful task of collating manuscripts and versions. His great work was published at Oxford, A.D. 1707. He was succeeded by Kuster in Holland and Bengel in Germany, and eminently so by Wetstein in his most learned and valuable edition of the Greek Testament published at Amsterdam A.D. 1751, 1752, in two folio volumes. Their successors in the same field of laborious inquiry were Alter at Vienna, Matthai at Moscow, Birch at Copenhagen; and last of all, that industrious and very accurate critic, Professor Griesbach of the university of Jena in Saxony, whose revision of the text of the New Testament, founded upon a collation of manuscripts, of ancient versions, and of ecclesiastical writers, is now universally received by biblical scholars as approximating the nearest to the purity of the sacred originals, of any which has yet been published. See Introduction to the *Improved Version of the New Testament*, sect. vi.

**Commentaries of Julius Cæsar, or the Annals of Tacitus :** and yet the most learned and the best informed men receive these Works as genuine : and he would be laughed to scorn who should express a doubt upon the subject. Much more then may we receive as unquestionably genuine the Epistles of Paul, the evidence of which is so much brighter and more decisive than that of any classical writer. And it is a fair and undeniable conclusion, that a person is fully justified in sitting down to read the Epistles of Paul with as complete a conviction that they were written by him, as if he had been present while the apostle was dictating, or had even been himself the apostle's amanuensis.

This is a principle which it is extremely desirable to bear continually in mind while we are reading the epistles. For it seems next to impossible that a person should admit the existence of such a man as Paul of Tarsus, and that he was verily and indeed the author of the epistles which bear his name, and at the same time, after a serious and attentive perusal of the epistles, that he should remain an unbeliever in the Christian revelation.

And this, no doubt, is the true design and the most important use of these inestimable writings, though not often or sufficiently adverted to. Far indeed were they from being intended to incumber the plain and simple doctrine of Christ, with an additional mass of curious speculations concerning election and predestination, original sin, vicarious suffering, irresistible grace, imputed righteousness, and final perseverance, to none of which do the epistles, when rightly understood, give the least countenance. These invaluable records are calculated to convey to the latest generation the most substantial evidence of the truth and divine original of the Christian religion : and this they do, by exhibiting a very fair and most interesting representation of the character, the views, the feelings, and the exertions of one of the principal leaders and teachers of the new religion, of the very extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed, and of the integrity, the zeal, the courage, the fortitude, the patience, the prudence, and the perseverance, which he manifested in the discharge of his mission, in the labours which he undertook, in the dangers which

he encountered, and in the sufferings which he endured. They also display the dispositions, characters, and views, the feelings, the prejudices, the imperfect information, the partial reformation, the errors, the faults and irregularities, the frequent wavering and instability, of the first professors of the Christian faith : also, the dangers to which they were exposed, and the joyful and faithful adherence of many to the apostle, and his doctrine, in the midst of sufferings and persecutions. These Epistles manifest in particular, the violent prejudices of the Hebrew believers against the apostle on account of his liberality to Gentile Christians, and how constantly they followed his steps wherever he had founded a Gentile church, insisting upon the absolute necessity of subjection to the yoke of the ceremonial law, and denouncing the apostle as an unauthorized preacher of the gospel, and one whose doctrine and authority were disowned by the original and genuine apostles of Christ. These charges imposed upon the apostle the indispensable obligation of defending his character and authority by such direct appeals to the miraculous powers which he possessed and ex-

erted, and the supernatural gifts which he had even communicated to many converts, as must have silenced all objection if his appeal were just; and must have involved himself, his writings, and his doctrine, in eternal disgrace, if it were not so. In fact, the appeal was such as no man in his senses could have made, had he not known that it was true and unanswerable. So that, if the Epistles are genuine and the apostle was in his right mind, the reader may be as certain of the truth of the miracles and of the divine authority of the Christian religion as founded upon them, as if he had actually been an eye-witness to the extraordinary events related in the gospel, or had seen our Lord himself raised from the dead.

To those readers who consider the subject in this light, the Epistles of Paul will appear an inestimable treasure; and instead of being, as they have hitherto often been, neglected by many as obscure and of little value, and abused by others as the inexhaustible source of animosity and bitter controversy, they will become a delightful occasion of concord and harmony through the whole Christian world, being received by all parties as containing the most ir-

resistible evidence of their common faith. And if what is now offered to the public for the purpose of elucidating this important portion of the Sacred Writings, is made effectual in any degree to the accomplishing this desirable end, the Author will be happy in the reflection that he has not lived or laboured in vain.





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## CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT

or

### THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

[*Chiefly taken from Lardner's Works, vol. vi. ch. xi.*]

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<sup>A.D.</sup>  
5. **THE** apostle PAUL, descended probably on both sides from Jewish parents, of the tribe of Benjamin, and by birth a Roman citizen, was born at Tarsus, an opulent city of Cilicia, perhaps a few years after the birth of Christ<sup>1</sup>, Acts xxi. 39, xxii. 3; Phil. iii. 5.

30. Christ suffered at the Passover in March, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. The holy spirit was

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<sup>1</sup> *A few years after the birth of Christ.*] Paul is called a young man Acts vii. 58; and in the Epistle to Philemon, ver. 9, he calls himself Paul *the aged*, A.D. 62, unless for the word *πρεσβυτης* *aged* we read *πρεσβευτης* *ambassador*, which is perhaps the more probable reading, though it is only supported by conjecture. See Lardner, vol. vi. ch. xi. sect. 4.

A.D.

30. poured out upon the apostles at the Pentecost in May. See Priestley's *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists*, sect. 2.
35. September, or October. Pilate removed<sup>1</sup>: no successor appointed till

<sup>1</sup> *Pilate removed.*] In order to retain a distinct idea of the order of events in the public life of the apostle, it will be of use to bear in mind certain dates which are pretty well ascertained, and which form, as it were, landmarks for the arrangement of principal facts.

1. The first is the recall of Pilate, by Vitellius the lieutenant of Tiberius, at the solicitation of the Jews, a year and half before the death of Tiberius, September or October A.D. 35. Lardner, vol. i. p. 374. After which no governor with power of life and death was sent into Judea, till Petronius was appointed by Caligula, *i. e.* for three or four years. Hence it is concluded, that Stephen was martyred in the latter end of A.D. 35, as it does not appear that the Romans took offence at so irregular an act. John xviii. 31.

2. The second event is the attempt of Petronius to introduce the image of Caligula into the sanctuary A.D. 40; which by the universal consternation it excited is supposed to have put a stop to the persecution, and to have produced that rest to the churches which is mentioned Acts ix. 31. But this did not take place till after Paul had escaped from Jerusalem to Tarsus, Acts ix. 30, more than three years after his conversion, Gal. i. 18; which must therefore have happened A.D. 36 or 37. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 242.

3. The death of Herod Agrippa happened A.D. 44, Acts xii., and the famine predicted by Agabus, Acts xi. 27—30, soon followed it. Lardner, vol. i. p. 240, vol. vi. p. 268. This fixes the time when Paul and Barnabas visited Jerusalem with the collection from Antioch, Acts xi. 30.

4. Fourteen years after his conversion, Paul and Bar-

A.D.

35. Petronius. Paul at Jerusalem. Stephen martyred<sup>2</sup> in December. The gospel preached in Samaria. Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts vii. viii.

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nabas visited Jerusalem to settle the question concerning circumcision, Gal. ii. 1; which therefore must have happened A.D. 49 or 50. It is mentioned by Luke Acts xv. and by Paul Gal. ii. 1—10. This settles the date of the Jerusalem decree, which the apostles took back with them to Antioch the latter end of the year. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 274.

5. The decree of Claudius to banish the Jews from Rome was issued A.D. 51. Lardner, *ibid.* p. 280. When the apostle came to Corinth, he there found Aquila and Priscilla, who had been banished by that decree: probably, therefore, he reached Corinth at the latter end of that year, where he staid a year and six months, that is, till March or April A.D. 53. Acts xviii. Lardner, *ibid.* p. 279.

After this period the chronology is tolerably clear. The apostle remained at Ephesus about three years. Acts xx. 31. He left that city in the spring of A.D. 56, passed two years in Macedonia, &c., and the winter of A.D. 57 at Corinth, which he left in the spring of A.D. 58, and kept the Passover at Philippi: he hastened to Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost; where in a few days he was seized in the temple, and confined a prisoner at Cesarea for two years. He was sent to Rome A.D. 60, where he arrived in the spring of A.D. 61, and was released A.D. 63. Lardner, vol. vi. ch. xi. sect. 11, 12.

In this manner we obtain tolerably correct dates of many of the principal events. But there are some at which we can only guess; and difficulties attend every hypothesis. These are principally the date of the apostle's visit to Crete, of the First Epistle to Timothy, and of the journey to Illyricum.

<sup>2</sup> *Stephen martyred.*] The death of Stephen was an irregular act, yet no notice was taken of it by the Romans:

A.D.

36. November. Paul converted on the way to Damascus, Acts ix. 1—22; and invested with the apostolic office<sup>1</sup>.
37. Paul visits Arabia, Gal. i. 17.
38. Paul in Arabia; is instructed by Christ in the doctrine of the gospel, *ibid*.
39. Returns to Damascus; preaches in the synagogues; is persecuted; let down in a basket from the wall, and escapes to Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>, Acts ix. 23—25, 2 Cor. xi. 31, 32; spends a fortnight with Peter, Gal. i. 18; falls into the trance mentioned Acts xxii. 17; goes down to Cesarea Philippi, and from thence to Tarsus, Acts ix. 25—30, Gal. i. 22.

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hence it is concluded that this event took place in the interval between the removal of Pilate A.D. 35, and the appointment of Petronius A.D. 39 or 40; during which interval there was no procurator with power of life and death. Lardner places the martyrdom of Stephen in December A.D. 35. Lardner, vol. vi. p. 240, 241.

<sup>1</sup> *Invested with the apostolic office.*] A trivial controversy has been moved concerning the time when Paul became an apostle, which Lardner properly dates from the time of his conversion, when Christ appeared to him and gave him his commission. Acts xxvi. 15—20. Lardner, vol. vi. ch. xi. sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Escapes to Jerusalem.*] The apostle Paul was converted A.D. 36, and died A.D. 56, making the whole course of his ministry and apostleship 20 years; of which two were passed in Arabia, two as a prisoner in Judea,

A.D.

40. Petronius attempts to set up the statue of Caligula in the most holy place. The alarm excited diverts the Jews from persecuting the Christians, and gives rest to the church, Acts ix. 31. Peter visits Lydda, and heals Eneas, ver. 24, —Joppa, and raises Dorcas, ver. 40, —Cesarea, and converts Cornelius, Acts x., and returns to Jerusalem; where he vindicates his conduct towards the Gentiles, Acts xi. Paul remains at Tarsus, or in the neighbourhood, probably preaching the gospel in Syria and Cilicia, Gal. i. 21.
41. Paul at Tarsus. Barnabas is sent down by the apostles to Antioch, in conse-

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and two in confinement at Rome: so that the whole course of his active ministry was no more than 29 years. After his conversion, he made five visits to Jerusalem, all of them very short. The first was three years after his conversion, when he escaped from Damascus, Acts ix. 26; and staid only fifteen days, Gal. i. 18. The second was in company with Barnabas, to bring a contribution from Antioch, Acts xi. 30, A.D. 44. The third visit was A.D. 50, when he and Barnabas were deputed to consult the apostles upon the question of circumcision, and returned to Antioch with the Jerusalem decree, Acts xv. The fourth was a mere salutation in his rapid journey in the summer of A.D. 53, Acts xviii. 22. And the fifth and last was at the feast of Pentecost A.D. 58, when he was almost immediately seized by the mob, and after two years' imprisonment was sent a prisoner to Rome, Acts xxi. 27.

A.D.

41. quence of the great success of the gospel among the Gentiles there, to confirm the new disciples, Acts xi. 22.
42. Barnabas visits Tarsus, and brings Paul to Antioch, ver. 25. Lardner, *ibid.* ch. xi. sect. 8.
43. Paul and Barnabas pass a year at Antioch, where the disciples are named Christians<sup>1</sup>, ver. 26, 27. Paul is favoured with the vision, or rapture, mentioned 2 Cor. xii.

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<sup>1</sup> *Christians.*] A designation probably imposed by the enemies of Christianity, who annexed no other idea to Christ but that of a despicable Jew who had suffered an ignominious death for treason and blasphemy; and among the Greeks and Romans it would sound pretty much as עבדי תלמי (abde tolvi) did to the Hebrews, who branded the disciples of Christ, as the *followers of the man that was hanged*. The word *Christian* occurs but three times in the New Testament, and always in a bad sense. The first is in the text before us, Acts xi. 26. It occurs secondly Acts xxvi. 28, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian*;" where it is observable that the apostle does not repeat Agrippa's words, and express a wish that he and all who heard him were altogether *Christians*, but altogether *such as himself*. And finally 1 Pet. iv. 16, where the word *Christian* is evidently mentioned as used by the enemies of the gospel synonymously with *malefactor*.—If the name *Christian* had been given by divine appointment, as many suppose, it would have been constantly used by the apostles and primitive believers; and must have occurred hundreds of times in the New Testament. It is very true that the title was soon adopted, and became the boast of the early believers, but not in the age of the apostles. The apostle Paul never uses the word *Christian* in all his epi-

A.D.

44. Agabus foretells a famine: Paul and Barnabas are sent with a collection for the relief of the poor believers in Judea, Acts xi. 27—30. Herod persecutes the church, puts James to death, and imprisons Peter, who is released by an angel, Acts xii. 1—19. Herod dies at the end of the year. Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Mark, return to Antioch, ver. 20—25. Dr. Lardner supposes that it was at this time that the apostle was favoured with the trance mentioned Acts xxii. 17.
45. Paul and Barnabas by divine direction set out upon a mission, accompanied by Mark. Lardner, *ibid.* sect. 9, Acts xiii. 1—3. They visit Seleucia and Cyprus, where Paul strikes Elymas the sorcerer with blindness for his malicious opposition to the gospel, converts the proconsul Sergius Paulus, and takes the Roman name of Paul in exchange for his Jewish name, Saul;

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stles, instead of which he uses the epithets *holy*, *brethren*, *believers*, and the like: for which reason those words also have been generally adopted in the paraphrase, as it seemed improper to represent the apostle as using a word which he appears purposely to have avoided. See Lardner, *ibid.* p. 265.

A.D.

45. and, having passed through the island from Salamis to Paphos, ver. 4—12,
46. The apostles sail to Perga in Pamphylia, where they are deserted by Mark, ver. 13. They proceed to Antioch in Pisidia, where they preach the gospel with great success, ver. 13—51; but being persecuted and driven out by the malignity of the Jews, they escape to Iconium, ver. 52, 53, where they make a considerable stay, and gain many proselytes, ch. xiv. 1—6; but the Jews inflaming the multitude against them, they flee to Lystra.
47. At Lystra Paul heals the cripple, ver. 7—10, and with difficulty prevents the people from offering sacrifices to him and Barnabas as incarnate deities, ver. 11—18; but the same populace being afterwards instigated by emissaries from Antioch and Iconium, stone Paul and drag him out of the city; but recovering, he escapes to Derbe, ver. 19, 20; from which place, after having made a considerable number of converts, they return to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and passing through Attalia they sail



A.D.

47. for Antioch in Syria, from whence they set out, and having made a report of their mission, they remain in that city a considerable time, ver. 21—28.
48. Paul continues at Antioch.
49. Paul at Antioch. Zealots from Jerusalem disturb the peace of the church by insisting upon the necessity of circumcision.
50. Paul and Barnabas are deputed to go to Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> to settle with the apo-

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<sup>1</sup> *Deputed to Jerusalem.*] Luke and Paul both give an account of this transaction : the former Acts xv., the latter Galatians ii. 1—10, but with a very different spirit. Luke simply reports, that in consequence of the disputes concerning circumcision, the brethren at Antioch determine that Paul and Barnabas, and some others, should go up to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders upon this question ; but he says nothing of the high spirit which Paul exemplified upon this occasion, and which we learn only from his own account in the Epistle to the Galatians. Conscious of the high authority under which he acted, he would upon no account compromise his character as the apostle of the Gentiles, nor suffer his decisions to be called in question. And if he went up to Jerusalem to consult with the other apostles, it was not as the delegate of the church of Antioch, but by express divine revelation. Gal. ii. 1. And when there, he did not seek either for information or advice from his apostolic brethren, but only communicated to them the doctrine which he taught, in which they acquiesced, and to which they added nothing, but with the greatest readiness acknowledged his authority to be on a par with their own. And as to the bigots who would impose circumcision on the Gentiles, he treated them with the utmost contempt; and in defiance of their

A.D.

50. stles the question of circumcision, Acts xv. 1—29. Paul strenuously supports the liberties of the Gentile church, and the validity of his mission is fully acknowledged by the other apostles, Gal. ii. 1—10. On their return they pass through Phenice and Samaria, announcing the decision of the apostles, and arrive at Antioch with the Jerusalem decree, accompanied by Judas and Silas, Acts xv. 30—35; Lardner, vol. vi. p. 273. Peter visits Antioch, and is publicly reprov'd by Paul for his duplicity, Gal. ii. 11—21. Silas remains at Antioch. Paul invites Barnabas to revisit the churches which they had planted. Barnabas proposes to associate Mark with them, which Paul refuses; in consequence of which disagreement they separate from each other, and Barnabas in company with Mark, and Paul with Silas, pursue different routes. Acts xv. 35—40; Lardner, *ibid.* ch. xi. sect. 10.

51. Paul and Silas visit Syria and Cilicia<sup>1</sup>,

anathemas he brought up Titus with him to Jerusalem, who was an uncircumcised Gentile convert, and whom he would not suffer to be subjected to the yoke of the law.

<sup>1</sup> *Paul visits Syria and Cilicia.*] Witsius and L. Ca-

A.D.

## 51. ver. 41. They pass through Derbe and Lystra, where Paul finding Timothy,

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pellus think that the apostle went from Cilicia to Crete, it being very improbable that the gospel should not have been introduced into Crete till A.D. 63 or 64, the time assigned by Pearson, Benson, and others, when all the countries round had received it long before. Lardner, *ibid.* p. 276. Lardner is of opinion that the visit to Crete happened some time in the interval between the apostle's leaving Troas in the spring of A.D. 56, and returning thither again in the spring of A.D. 58, in his way to Jerusalem. In this interval also he places his journey to Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19, and his purposed residence at Nicopolis, either in Epirus or Thrace, Titus iii. 12. "But I cannot," says he, "digest the order of his journeys, since St. Luke has not related them." p. 287.

Dr. Ashworth, the late learned and respectable tutor of Mr. Coward's Academy at Daventry, in his manuscript life of the apostle conjectures that Paul took some opportunity of visiting and preaching the gospel in Crete during the three years which are assigned for his residence at Ephesus and in its vicinity; during which time it is allowed by critics that he did not confine himself wholly to that city and its environs. The mission to Crete is supposed to have occurred in the latter end of A.D. 55. And the apostle returning in the beginning of A.D. 56, writes the Epistle to Titus, directing him, when relieved by his successor, to come to him at Nicopolis, where he then proposed to pass the winter. But soon after he had sent this epistle, the apostle received the deputation from Corinth, which induced him materially to vary his plan; and, instead of spending the winter at Nicopolis, he proposes to pass it at Corinth. And, having sent his reply to the Corinthians by the messengers who brought their letter to him, the apostle dispatches Artemas to Crete to set Titus at liberty, directing him to go immediately to Corinth, and that after having waited long enough to observe the general state of things at Corinth, and the impression made upon the Corinthians by his letter, he should leave Corinth

A.D.

51. assumes him as an associate, having been well recommended by the elders, Acts xvi. 1—3. They pass on to Phrygia and Galatia, and being restrained by the spirit from preaching in the proconsular Asia, they proceed to Mysia, and being forbidden to visit Bithynia,

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in time to meet the apostle, if possible, at Troas, where he intended to be, soon after Pentecost, in his way from Ephesus to Macedonia. But the apostle being probably obliged to leave Ephesus sooner than he intended, in consequence of the tumult of Demetrius and the artists, did not find Titus at Troas; and, being impatient to receive tidings from Corinth, he hastened into Macedonia, where, to his great joy, he found the evangelist, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13, vii. 5—7. But though the tidings brought by Titus were upon the whole encouraging, yet the apostle, willing to allow the irregular members more time to reflect and to reform, determined upon deferring his proposed visit till the following year; and, instead of going to Corinth at the latter end of A.D. 56, he made a circuit into Illyricum, from which he is supposed to have returned in the spring of A.D. 57 to Macedonia, where he probably found Timothy, who joined with him in writing the Second Epistle to the Corinthians; which was carried by Titus and Luke, and in which he apologizes for having so long deferred his visit. 2 Cor. i. 15—24, ix. 2, compared with 1 Cor. xvi. 1—4. The apostle followed this letter in person at the latter end of the year; and, having passed three months at Corinth and written an epistle to the Romans, he leaves Corinth in the spring of A.D. 58, and reaches Philippi at the Passover in his way to Jerusalem.

This scheme is acknowledged to be only a hypothesis; but such is every other way of accounting for this part of the apostle's missionary travels, and it is only proposed as affording a probable solution of the difficulties which exist.

A.D.

51. they go on to Troas, ver. 4—8. At Troas a vision invites the mission into Macedonia. Luke joins the party, and begins to write in the first person, ver. 9, 10. They sail first to Samothrace, and then to Neapolis ; they visit Philippi, where Lydia is converted, the pythoness dispossessed, the apostles accused, beaten, and imprisoned, released by miracle, the jailer converted, the magistrates humbled, and the apostles set at liberty, ver. 11—40. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they arrive at Thessalonica, where they make some stay, and preach the gospel with great success. Here Paul works for his subsistence, and receives supplies from Philippi. Philip. iv. 16. They are driven from Thessalonica in consequence of a tumult excited by the unbelieving Jews, Acts xvii. 1—10. Paul escapes to Berea, where he makes many converts, and the Bereans are commended for trying his doctrine by the scriptures, ver. 11, 12 : but, the Jews from Thessalonica exciting the populace against him, the apostle is conducted privately to Athens, leaving

A.D.

51. Silas and Timothy behind, ver. 13—15. Timothy soon follows, and is sent by the apostle to visit and comfort the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. iii. 1. At Athens the apostle, moved by the gross idolatry of the place, remonstrates against it, Acts xvii. 16—18; and being brought before the court of Areopagus, he defends himself in the eloquent speech recorded Acts xvii. 21—31; and, though ridiculed by the philosophers, he makes some respectable converts, ver. 32—34. Paul proceeds to Corinth; meets Aquila and Priscilla, banished from Rome by Claudius's decree; lodges in their house, and supports himself by working in their occupation, ch. xviii. 1—3, being assisted occasionally by supplies from other churches, 2 Cor. xi. 8. At Corinth the apostle is joined by Silas and Timothy, Acts xviii. 5.
52. Paul continues at Corinth a year and a half; and from this city he writes the two epistles to the Thessalonians, and the epistles to the Galatians, Acts xviii. 11.
53. The first three months at Corinth.

A.D.

53. Gallio the proconsul refuses to listen to the complaints against Paul, ver. 12—17. Paul goes to Cenchrea; visits Ephesus for a short time; sails to Cesarea; makes a short visit at Jerusalem; spends some time at Antioch; passes through Galatia and Phrygia, in order confirming the churches; and, having made a circuit through the upper regions of Asia Minor, he arrives at Ephesus<sup>1</sup> after Apollos was gone to Corinth. Acts xviii. 18—xix. 1.

54. Paul at Ephesus, where he performs extraordinary miracles; and where the sons of Sceva are beaten by the demoniac, ver. 2—20. Claudius dies Oct. A.D. 54<sup>2</sup>. The apostle proposes, after visiting Macedonia and Achaia, to go

<sup>1</sup> *Arrives at Ephesus.*] Dr. Lardner says, “possibly in October or November;” and adds, “I hope I have allowed time enough for all the journeys hitherto mentioned; and that I have not brought Paul to Ephesus too soon.” Lardner, *ibid.* p. 280. The learned writer certainly keeps the apostle pretty much upon the alert during the summer of A.D. 53; and Dr. Ashworth inclines to allow him another year, beginning his mission from Antioch a year earlier. It is impossible to be perfectly accurate, and Dr. Lardner’s calculations are, upon the whole, as probable as any.

<sup>2</sup> *Claudius dies.*] See Lardner, *ibid.* p. 282.

A.D.

54. to Jerusalem, and thence to Rome. Acts xix. 21.
55. Paul probably visits Crete, and thence, perhaps, sends his First Epistle to Timothy. He leaves Titus to settle the church, Titus i. 5. Soon after his return he writes the Epistle to Titus, intending at that time to pass the winter at Nicopolis, where he directs Titus to meet him. Titus iii. 12.
56. The apostle proposes to remain at Ephesus till Pentecost, 1 Cor. xvi. 8 ; receives an epistle from Corinth, and writes the First Epistle to the Corinthians in reply.—He changes his plan ; sends Artemas to relieve Titus, and directs Titus to go to Corinth to see the state of things there, and to meet him at Troas, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13. He sends Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, Acts xix. 22. A tumult was excited at Ephesus by Demetrius and the artists, ver. 23 ; after which the apostle set out for Macedonia, xx. 1 ; and, leaving Ephesus probably something sooner than he intended, he comes earlier than he was expected, to Troas, 2 Cor. ii. 12. Not finding



A.D.

56. Titus there, and being impatient to receive tidings from Corinth, he crosses the sea into Macedonia, where he finds the evangelist, who gave him a favourable account of what was passing at Corinth.—From Macedonia, it is commonly believed, though probably erroneously, that the apostle dated his First Epistle to Timothy<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *The First Epistle to Timothy.*] It seems quite incredible that Paul, if he wrote this letter to Timothy from Macedonia, immediately after he had left Ephesus, 1 Tim. i. 3, should have made no allusion whatever to the danger to which he had been exposed by the tumult at Ephesus, to which he so feelingly refers in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written a year afterwards. This and other considerations have led Pearson, Paley, Mac-knight, and others, to fix the date of this epistle after the apostle's first imprisonment about A.D. 64. But, besides that this hypothesis contradicts the apostle's assertion that he should never visit Ephesus again, Acts xx. 25, it could hardly have been necessary at that time to have cautioned Timothy that no man should despise his youth, 1 Tim. iv. 12. On every hypothesis difficulties seem almost insurmountable. It seems to me possible that the epistle might have been written from Crete A.D. 55, when the apostle was there with Titus. He might have left Timothy to superintend the church at Ephesus during his absence, intending to return soon. The obvious objection against this is ch. i. 3, where he says expressly that he left Timothy at Ephesus when he went into Macedonia. This difficulty would be obviated if we could admit the reading of a manuscript of Hilary, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus (*cùm ires in Macedoniam*), when thou wert going into Macedonia." See Griesbach *in loc.* cl. 2. But it must be acknowledged that this reading is not supported by any other authority.

A.D.

56. When he wrote to the Corinthians it was his intention to have passed the winter at Corinth, 1 Cor. xvi. 6. But the intelligence he received from Titus, not being quite satisfactory, induced him to alter his plan, and to defer his visit to Corinth till the year following. In the mean time, after passing a few months in Macedonia, he went, perhaps in September or October, to preach the gospel in Illyricum. It is believed that Titus accompanied him, 2 Tim. iv. 10, 2 Cor. viii. 17, and Luke v. 22; and perhaps Timothy, whose name he joins with his own in the inscription of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The apostle and his associates returned to Macedonia in the spring of A.D. 57, Rom. xv. 19.

57. Returns to Macedonia; writes the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, joining the name of Timothy with his own. This he sends by Titus, 2 Cor. viii. 6, 22, accompanied by two other brethren, one of whom was probably Luke<sup>1</sup>. See ver. 18, 19, and P.S. to

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<sup>1</sup> *Probably Luke.*] Luke first joined the apostle at

A.D.

57. the epistle. At the latter end of the year he visits Corinth, and stays three months, Acts xx. 3. From Corinth the apostle writes the Epistle to the Romans.
58. Paul reaches Philippi before the Passover, and there spends the days of unleavened bread, ver. 6; and is again joined by Luke, who perhaps accom-

Troas, and accompanied him into Macedonia, Acts xvi. 10, 11. He seems to have parted from him at Philippi, Acts xvii. 1, but to have joined him again at Philippi when he quitted Macedonia on his way to Jerusalem A.D. 58, and from that time to have been his constant associate, Acts xx. 1—6, Lardner. vol. vi. p. 105. It is remarkable that Luke, through his whole history, never mentions Titus, though they must often have travelled together in company with the apostle; and in this instance were associated in the same mission. There must have been some reason for this pointed neglect. Perhaps the following may be assigned as not improbable: The apostle in his Second Epistle to Timothy, written probably soon after the commencement of his first imprisonment, ch. vi. 10, 11, complains of being abandoned by many of his friends. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." Demas, it appears, soon repented, and joined the apostle again; who makes honourable mention of him in the epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. But of Titus we hear no more. It does not appear that he ever returned to the apostle: his name is never mentioned again. And Luke, who was then writing his history, which closes with Paul's imprisonment, might so far resent the conduct of Titus as not to introduce his name.

A.D.

58. <sup>A.D.</sup>panied the apostle from Corinth. At Troas he raises Eutychus to life, ver. 7—12. From Troas he passes by Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Trogyllium, and Miletus, on his way to Jerusalem. At Miletus he sends for the elders of Ephesus, and delivers to them the beautiful and affecting charge recorded ver. 17—38. Hence he passes by Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Cesarea, where Agabus foretells his imprisonment and bonds, Acts xxi. 1—14; and reaches Jerusalem by the feast of Pentecost, ver. 15, 16. Here, having by the advice of James joined in purification with four Nazarites, seven days after his arrival, an outcry of profaning the temple was raised against him by some Asiatic Jews; and being seized and beaten by the mob, he was rescued by the Roman military commander Claudius Lysias, by whom he was permitted to address the people in his own defence, xxi. 18—xxii. 21. This harangue being interrupted by a tumult, the commander ordered him to be examined by scourging; but desisted upon being informed

A.D.

58. that the apostle was a free citizen of Rome, ver. 22—30. 'The next day being examined before the council, and having severely reproved the high-priest for ordering him to be struck without any provocation, the apostle, being reminded of the dignity of the magistrate, apologizes for his freedom; after which he divides the council, by declaring himself a Pharisee, and, being in danger of his life, he was rescued by the Roman commander, Acts xxiii. 1—10, and afterwards encouraged by Christ in a vision, ver. 11. Forty Jews having bound themselves by an oath to assassinate the apostle, and the conspiracy being discovered by a youth who was related to him, the Roman commander again protects him, and sends him by night under a military escort to Cesarea, to plead his cause before Felix, the Roman governor, ver. 12—35; who, when his accusers were come, after having heard Tertullus's charge and the apostle's manly defence, defers the judgement, and remands the apostle into custody, expecting that he would offer him a

A.D.

58. bribe to be set at liberty. In the mean time he frequently sends for the apostle, and hears his doctrine with emotion: nevertheless he keeps him in confinement for two years; and when recalled from his government, in order to gratify the Jews whose resentment he feared, Felix leaves Paul in bonds. During this period we are not told that the apostle either wrote an epistle or delivered a discourse; though we may be sure that he would gladly avail himself of every opportunity that offered to teach the gospel, Acts xxiv.
59. Paul a prisoner at Cesarea.
60. Paul still in prison. Festus succeeds Felix; visits Jerusalem, where the Jewish rulers allege charges against Paul; he orders the accusers down to Cesarea, where he hears but does not decide the cause, Acts xxv. 1—4. To please the Jews, however, Festus proposes to the apostle to take his trial at Jerusalem, which the apostle, apprehensive for his life, declines; and availing himself of his privilege as a Roman citizen, he appeals to Cesar: which appeal is allowed by Festus and his

A.D.

60. council, ver. 5—12. Shortly afterward, Agrippa and Berenice being upon a visit to Festus to compliment him upon his accession to the government, Festus states the case of the apostle, and his own difficulty in describing the nature of the charge, ver. 13—22. Agrippa earnestly desiring to hear Paul, Festus consents; and the apostle being brought into court, and leave being granted, ver. 23—27, he makes the eloquent defence recorded ch. xxvi. 1—30; after which the king and the governor express their regret that, on account of his appeal, they could not immediately release him, ver. 31, 32. At the latter end of the year, perhaps in October, he sets sail for Rome, ch. xxvii. 1—13; and the weather proving tempestuous, and the mariners being disappointed in their purpose of sheltering themselves in Crete, the ship was wrecked on the coast of Malta, probably in the month of November, ver. 14—44.
61. At Malta Paul miraculously escapes from the bite of a viper, ch. xxviii. 1—6; he heals the father of Publius,

- <sup>A.D.</sup>  
 61. and others, ver. 7—10; and at the end of three months he sails for Italy, lands at Puteoli, passes a week with his friends, and proceeds to Rome <sup>1</sup>, ver. 11—14; where, probably after an early hearing of his cause, he was permitted to reside at his own house in military custody, and to preach and teach without restraint, ver. 15—30. Soon after his first hearing he writes the Second Epistle to Timothy <sup>2</sup>.
62. Paul a prisoner at Rome, ver. 31, 32; writes the Epistles to the Ephesians or Laodiceans, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon.
63. Paul released <sup>3</sup>, probably in the spring. Dictates the Epistle to the Hebrews, if that be his; is supposed to have visited Colossæ, Philippi, Ephesus, and Jerusalem; and after this to have returned to Rome. Some have thought

<sup>1</sup> *Proceeds to Rome.*] Probably in the month of February in the seventh year of the reign of Nero. See Pearson and Witsius *apud* Lardner, *ibid.* p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *Second Epistle to Timothy.*] This fact appears to be decisively established by Lardner, vol. vi. ch. xii. sect. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Paul released.*] For the conjectures and traditions concerning the apostle after his release from what is called his first imprisonment, see Lardner, vol. vi. ch. xi. sect. 13.



A.D.

63. that he visited Spain, and even Britain, but of this there is no proof or probability.
64. Rome was set on fire by Nero, who, to exonerate himself, charged the crime upon the Christians, for which they were cruelly persecuted.
65. In this persecution the apostles Paul and Peter both suffered martyrdom ; it is said on the same day ; Peter by crucifixion ; Paul, as a Roman, by decapitation. He was buried in the Via Ostiensis, being probably about sixty years of age. That the apostle did not survive this persecution is highly probable ; as, otherwise, he could not have failed to have written an Epistle of condolence, of consolation, and encouragement, upon this memorable occasion.

END OF THE LIFE OF PAUL.

# APPENDIX TO THE LIFE OF PAUL.

“A TABLE OF ST. PAUL’S EPISTLES, IN THE ORDER OF TIME ; WITH THE PLACES WHERE, AND THE TIMES WHEN, THEY WERE WRITTEN.”

[Prefixed to Dr. Lardner’s Supplement, in his Works, vol. vi., Dr. Kippis’s edition.]

EPISTLES.	PLACES.	A.D.
1 Thessalonians .	Corinth . . . . .	52
2 Thessalonians .	Corinth . . . . .	52
Galatians . . .	{ Corinth . . . near the end of	52
	{ or Ephesus . the beginning of	53
1 Corinthians . .	Ephesus . . the beginning of	56
1 Timothy <sup>1</sup> . . .	Macedonia . . . . .	56
Titus <sup>2</sup> , in or near	Macedonia . before the end of	56
2 Corinthians . .	Macedonia . about October .	57
Romans . . . .	Corinth . . about February	58
Ephesians <sup>3</sup> . . .	Rome . . . about April . .	61
2 Timothy . . .	Rome . . . about May . .	61
Philippians . . .	Rome . . . before the end of	62
Colossians . . .	Rome . . . before the end of	62
Philemon . . . .	Rome . . . before the end of	62
Hebrews . . . .	Rome or Italy in the spring of	63

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Timothy*.] For reasons which are elsewhere assigned, it seems quite impossible that the First Epistle to Timothy

should have been written in the journey which Luke mentions, when the apostle went from Ephesus to Macedonia in the spring of A.D. 56. And the hypothesis which assigns a date to this epistle in a journey which happened on the apostle's return to Rome A.D. 64, after his first imprisonment, is liable to great, though not equal, difficulties. The supposition that the apostle visited Crete from Ephesus, that he then left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus, and that he wrote a letter of advice to him from Crete, is the hypothesis which appears to me to be attended with the fewest difficulties; though neither this nor any other hypothesis is supported by much external evidence. Upon this supposition, the First Epistle to Timothy would be dated about the latter end of A.D. 55.

<sup>a</sup> *Titus, in or near Macedonia.*] If the late Dr. Ashworth's hypothesis be admitted, that "the apostle went from Ephesus to preach the gospel in Crete, where he left Titus," the Epistle to Titus must have been written from Ephesus in the beginning of A.D. 56, before the apostle had received the letter from the Corinthians. This induced him to change his plan, and to send a message to Titus; that instead of meeting him at Nicopolis, he should go forthwith to Corinth, and, after having learned the state of things there, that he should return immediately to meet the apostle at Troas, or at least in the nearest city of Macedonia.

<sup>a</sup> *Ephesians, Rome A.D. 61.*] Dr. Lardner has taken great pains to show that the Epistle to the Ephesians was not only actually addressed to the Ephesians, but that it was the first of all the epistles which were dated from Rome; and that, together probably with the Second Epistle to Timothy, it was sent to Ephesus by Tychicus, who returned again to Rome in time to carry the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. Lardner, *ibid.* vol. vi. p. 327. But Dr. Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ* has demonstrated with such irresistible evidence that the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians must have been written nearly at the same time; and it is so clear, and indeed undisputed, that the Epistle to the Colossians was written near the close of the first imprisonment, that Dr. Lardner's argument cannot be sustained. It is also equally evident,

and demonstrated by Paley, that the letter could not be addressed to the inhabitants of Ephesus; but was either a general circular epistle, or the Epistle to the Laodiceans to which the apostle alludes Col. iv. 16. At all events, this epistle must have been written and sent at the same time with that to the Colossians and the Epistle to Philemon, and by the same messengers, before the end of A.D. 62. The Epistle to the Philippians was probably written somewhat later; Epaphroditus, the bearer of it, Phil. ii. 25, being with the apostle at Rome when he sent the Epistle to the Colossians, Col. iv. 12.

The following, therefore, appears to be the most probable order of the Epistles, from 1 Timothy:—

EPISTLES.	PLACES.	A.D.
1 Timothy . . .	Crete . . . .	the latter end of . . . 55
Titus . . . . .	Ephesus . . .	beginning of . . . . . 56
1 Corinthians .	Ephesus . . .	spring of . . . . . 56
2 Corinthians .	Macedonia .	about October . . . . 57
Romans . . . .	Corinth . . .	about February . . . 58
2 Timothy . . .	Rome . . . . .	about May . . . . . 61
Ephesians . . .	Rome . . . . .	before the end of . . 62
Colossians. . .	Rome . . . . .	before the end of . . 62
Philemon . . .	Rome . . . . .	. . . . . 62
Philippians . .	Rome . . . . .	near the end of . . . 62
Hebrews . . . .	} Italy . . . .	in the spring of . . . 63
(writer unknown)		

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#### ERRATUM.

Vol. ii. page 2, line 13 from top, for *musical* read *mechanical*.

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# THE EPISTLE

OF

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

### THE ROMANS.

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#### INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS.

THE APOSTLE PAUL is supposed to have left Ephesus about Pentecost, A.D. 56, and to have spent the following winter in Macedonia. It was his design to have visited Corinth in the spring; but it appears probable that he deferred his journey a year longer than he intended, see 1 Cor. xvi. 1—8 compared with 2 Cor. i. 15—24, ix. 1—4, and that he availed himself of this opportunity to preach the gospel in Illyricum and the neighbouring regions. Rom. xv. 19—23.

From Macedonia the apostle came to Corinth, probably in the latter end of the year 57; and, having passed three months in that city, he returned to Macedonia in February A.D. 58, on his

way to Jerusalem: but he did not leave Philippi till after the passover.

During his residence at Corinth the apostle wrote his epistle to the Romans. This appears from the recommendation which he gives, ch. xvi. 1, of Phebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, a sea-port in the neighbourhood of Corinth: this person was probably intrusted with the epistle. He also mentions Gaius as his host, Rom. xvi. 23; who was an eminent disciple at Corinth, and one of the very few whom the apostle himself had baptized, 1 Cor. i. 14. That the epistle was written by Paul at the time assigned as its date, is manifest from the circumstance of his being engaged to carry to Jerusalem a contribution which at his recommendation had been made for the poor believers there, by their more opulent brethren in Macedonia and Achaia, Rom. xv. 25—31. Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4. Upon which occasion it appears, that several persons, whose names are mentioned as sending their salutations to their brethren at Rome, were his companions from Greece. Rom. xvi. 21; Acts xx. 4.

It is uncertain when, or by whom, the gospel was first preached at Rome. It seems evident that no apostle had yet been there; it being probable, from Rom. i. 11, that no spiritual gift had hitherto been conferred on the Roman believers, as the apostle expresses his wish to visit them for this very purpose. It is certain, however, that the number of believers at Rome at the time when the epistle was

written was very considerable, and their character extensively and deservedly celebrated through the churches, Rom. i. 8. Nor is it at all surprising or improbable, that a numerous body of believers should then exist at Rome. The imperial city was the metropolis of the world, and the resort of immense numbers from all quarters. Many Jews resided there as sojourners or inhabitants; and among these, no doubt, were many believers in Christ, whose persecution by their countrymen probably occasioned those tumults for which the Jews were banished by the decree of Claudius, A.D. 50. This decree expired with him three years afterwards, when the Jews were permitted to return. Aquila and Priscilla, natives of Pontus, who had left Italy on account of Claudius's decree, were found by the apostle at Corinth, Acts xviii. They accompanied him to Ephesus; and at the time when the apostle wrote they had returned and were resident at Rome, Rom. xvi. 3. It cannot admit of a doubt, that many heathen converts also resorted thither; and among them were probably some persons of distinction, and philosophers. These might have access to persons of rank at Rome, some of whom might be captivated with the simplicity of the Christian faith, and the benignity and perfection of christian morals, and might upon these grounds be induced to profess their faith in the doctrine of Christ. When the apostle was a prisoner at Rome, there were saints even in Cesar's household. Aristobulus and Narcissus, Rom. xvi. 10, 11, are sup-

posed to be persons of consequence, who, if not believers themselves, connived at the profession of Christianity by their domestics and dependents. Epaphras, or Epaphroditus, so often mentioned with applause by the apostle Paul in his epistles, is believed by some to have been the celebrated freedman of Nero<sup>1</sup>. And even Burrhus, the preceptor of Nero and governor of the city, is by many thought to have been partial to the Christians, if he was not himself a believer. These facts are mentioned to show that it is not at all incredible, that a numerous and flourishing society of believers should have existed at Rome, though no apostle had been there to raise it; and that the mention of such a society is no presumption, as some have thought, against the authenticity of the epistle to the Romans.

This is one of those epistles, the genuineness of which, as Eusebius attests, was never called in question in the primitive ages of Christianity; and such are the internal characters of its authenticity, that it can hardly be disputed by any who are acquainted with the apostle's train of thought, or with his style of writing<sup>2</sup>.

The principal design of this excellent epistle is to

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<sup>1</sup> See Philip. i. 13, iv. 22; also Dr. Jones's Series of Important Facts, chap. iv. This learned writer supposes Seneca likewise to have been a Christian.

<sup>2</sup> The argument in favour of the genuineness of the Epistle to the Romans, from undesigned coincidences with facts related in Luke's History, is beautifully and irresistibly stated in Dr. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*: but it does not admit of abridgement.



exhibit and magnify the great mercy of God in the dispensation of the gospel to Jew and Gentile ; to illustrate the excellence of that dispensation, to justify the measures of the divine government, and to induce the believers at Rome to adorn their Christian profession by the practice of universal virtue.

The epistle is distributed, as most of the apostle's writings are, into two great divisions, **DOCTRINAL** and **PRACTICAL**. The **DOCTRINAL**, or argumentative portion, extends through the first eleven chapters ; the remainder of the epistle is chiefly occupied in **PRACTICAL** exhortation and advice.

The apostle, after a suitable introduction expressive of his apostolic authority, his good-will, and his earnest desire to visit them in person, chap. i. 1—17, enters upon the **ARGUMENTATIVE** portion of his epistle, which, without any formal distribution, he arranges under four heads—the Unmerited Goodness of God in communicating the gospel dispensation both to Jew and Gentile, chap. i. 18—v. ; the efficacy of the motives of the gospel for the Sanctification of believers, chap. vi.—viii. 17 ; also for their Consolation and encouragement, chap. viii. 18 to the end ; and, finally, the apostle states and justifies the conduct of Divine Providence in the present Rejection of the Jewish nation from a covenant state, and in the Invitation of the Gentiles, chap. ix.—xi.

In pursuing this train of argument, under the

First head, the apostle shows that neither Jews nor Gentiles possess any claim to the blessings of the gospel upon the ground of merit. And here 1. he considers the case of the heathen, chap. i. 18 to the end;—2. the case of the Jews, chap. ii. 1—iii. 20;—and 3. the case of both united, chap. iii. 21 to the end.—The apostle then states at large, that Abraham was justified by faith without merit, and that his justification was a pattern for all who believe in Christ, and who are admitted into the Christian covenant without any claim of right on their part, chap. iv.—The apostle further illustrates the privilege and happiness of those who are admitted thus freely, and from pure undeserved mercy, into the gospel covenant, chap. v. 1—11,—and finally, he argues his proposition, from the curse entailed upon the posterity of Adam by the lapse of their first parent, and states the vast extent of the blessings of the gospel beyond the miseries of the Fall, chap. v. 12 to the end.

The apostle, having thus established the mercy of God in the free gift of the gospel to those who had no antecedent claim to its blessings, proceeds

Secondly, to prove that the motives of the gospel are effectual to promote the renunciation of sin and the love and practice of universal virtue; 1. with regard to Gentile believers, who by the profession of the gospel are raised to a new life, chap. vi. 1—11, and entered into a new service, chap. vi. 12 to the end.—And 2. with regard to the Jewish believer: he is first released from a dead and united

to a living principle, chap. vii. 1—4; and secondly, as the law, by its severity, goaded those who were under its yoke to desperation and to vice, so the gospel, by the promise of forgiveness, encourages hope and animates to virtue. This the apostle illustrates by a beautiful allegory, in which he represents the awakened Jew, not yet released from the law, as suffering under the domineering tyranny of guilty passions, which were subdued and slain by the grace and mercy of the gospel, which set him free from the tyranny of the law, and inspired him with life and energy to obey the commandments of God, chap. vii. 5—viii. 17.

In his Third argument the apostle shows, that the principles and discoveries of the gospel are amply sufficient for the Consolation and encouragement of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, under all their trials and persecutions, chap. viii. 18 to the end.

The Fourth argument treats of the present rejection and ultimate restoration of the Jews, and of the invitation of the Gentiles into the privileges of the covenant. And First, he introduces the subject with great reluctance, chap. ix. 1—5;—he obviates objections, ver. 6—24;—he shows that these important events were foretold by the prophets, ver. 28 to the end;—he laments that his countrymen should reject the gospel, the easy requisitions of which he clearly defines, chap. x. 1—13;—and he vindicates the mission and the success of the apostles of Christ, notwithstanding the foreseen rejection of the Jews, ver. 14 to the end. Secondly,

concerning the restoration of his countrymen, he first shows that the present rejection of the Jews is not *total*, chap. xi. 1—10—and, further, that it is not *final*—and that in the mean time it accomplishes the wise and beneficent purposes of the divine government, as their ultimate restitution also will, ver. 11 to the end.

The apostle, having thus closed the ARGUMENTATIVE portion of this epistle, now proceeds to the PRACTICAL part.

And First, he exhorts believers, in consideration of the freedom of their admission to the privileges of the gospel, to adorn their profession by the practice of christian virtue, and by a faithful performance of the duties of their respective stations in the Church, chap. xii.

Secondly, upon Christian principles he enjoins the practice of all civil and social duties, chap. xiii.

Thirdly, the apostle recommends mutual candour to those who hold different opinions concerning things in their own nature indifferent, and particularly concerning the holiness of times, and the distinctions of food, chap. xiv. 1—xv. 13.

Fourthly, the apostle apologizes for the freedom of his address ; he pleads his privilege as the apostle of the Gentiles ; he modestly reports his great success ; he expresses his intention to visit Rome in his way to Spain, after having finished his commission at Jerusalem ; he is confident that his visit will be a mutual blessing ; he requests their prayers

for his safety and success, and concludes with his benediction, chap. xv. 14 to the end.

Fifthly, by way of postscript, the apostle recommends to their protection the person who was intrusted with the conveyance of the epistle ; he sends various salutations to friends at Rome ; he cautions them against the artifices of those who would disturb the peace of the church ; he transmits the salutations of believers at Corinth to their brethren at Rome ; he annexes a suitable doxology ; and concludes with repeating his apostolical benediction.

The Postscript containing the date, which in many cases is of no authority, in this epistle happens to be true. The letter was written at Corinth, and intrusted to the care of Phebe, a Christian of respectability at Cenchrea.



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# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

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## THE APOSTLE'S INTRODUCTION.

### CHAP. I. 1—17.

1. **THE** apostle introduces the epistle with an appropriate salutation, in which he hints at the argument for Christianity from the accomplishment of prophecy, ver. 1, 2; and from the resurrection of Christ, ver. 3, 4; and in the course of which he also asserts his own apostolic mission to the Gentiles, ver. 5—7. Ch. I.

*PAUL* a servant<sup>1</sup> of *Jesus Christ*, invited to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God, (which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning his son (who by natural descent was of the lineage of David, but with respect to his inspiration, was miraculously distinguished as the son of God by his resurrection from the dead,) even *Jesus Christ our Lord*; through whom we have received the favour of an apostle-Ver. 1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.

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<sup>1</sup> *Paul a servant*] “Δουλος is a servant who is the absolute property of his master, and bound to him for life.”—Dr. Taylor.

- ship, for preaching obedience to the faith among all the Gentiles, for the sake of spreading his name:*
- Ver. 6. *among which are ye also invited by Jesus Christ :*
7. *To all in Rome, who are beloved of God, invited, and holy, favour be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This sentence is a memorable example of that involved and intricate style which so much distinguishes the apostle's writings, and which, being very difficult to counterfeit, constitutes one considerable internal proof of the genuineness of Paul's epistles. It arises from the warmth and fulness of his heart, which often prevented him from paying attention to accuracy of method and perspicuity of expression. The main design of the apostle is to represent the gospel dispensation as the free unmerited gift of God, both to Jews and Gentiles; and authoritatively to establish the full equality of the Gentile believer with the believing Jew. With a view to this, in the very first sentence, and in the introductory salutation of the epistle, he asserts the divine authority of the gospel revelation as founded upon the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures; the claim of Jesus to be the true Messiah established by his resurrection from the dead; and his own apostolic mission for the conversion of the heathen world. And he addresses the whole body of Christians at Rome, consisting of converts both from Jews and Gentiles, as all equally entitled to those high and honourable appellations which under the



old covenant were appropriated to the Jews alone, Ch. I.  
as the peculiar people of God.

*Paul a servant*, a slave, or bondman, of *Jesus Christ*; to whom his whole life was devoted, and from whose authority he had neither inclination nor power to emancipate himself. Ver. 1.

*Invited to be an apostle*<sup>1</sup>. Not nominated by Christ during his personal ministry, nor, like Matthias, admitted by lot; but invited to the apostolic office by Jesus after his resurrection, who for this purpose appeared to him in the way to Damascus, and invested him with power and authority in no respect inferior to any of his colleagues.

*Separated to the gospel of God*. By divine direction, solemnly set apart with Barnabas for the ministry of the gospel to the Gentiles, and recommended by the brethren to the blessing of God. Acts xiii. 22.

It is observable that the apostle here calls the Christian revelation, the gospel of God. It originated in the mercy of God: from whom Christ received his commission. And the doctrine of the gospel is the best gift of God to man: it is glad tidings to an ignorant, an idolatrous, and a sinful world. It brings life and immortality to light.

This gospel had been *promised before by the* 2.

<sup>1</sup> *Invited*] “and therefore a true apostle; as an invited guest is a true and proper guest.”—Taylor. See Acts ix. 1—22, xxvi. 16—18.

<sup>2</sup> *Separated, &c.*] Or, by a divine designation from his birth. Gal. i. 15.

Ch. I. *prophets in the holy scriptures*<sup>1</sup>. This observation is with great propriety introduced by the apostle, in order to excite the attention of those of his countrymen at Rome who might see or hear this epistle. It was no new doctrine which the apostle taught, nothing inconsistent with that religion which they had received from their ancestors ; on the contrary, it had been repeatedly attested by the prophets under the Mosaic dispensation, who had foretold that the Messiah should appear and suffer, and that he should be the first who would be raised from the dead to an immortal life. The apostle calls the books of the old Testament the holy Scriptures, or the holy Writings, not because he regarded them as being all divinely inspired, but because they were preeminently distinguished from all other books which then existed, as containing upon the whole a faithful narrative of divine communications to the Jewish nation.

Ver. 3. *The gospel of God concerning his son*<sup>2</sup>; that

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<sup>1</sup> *Promised by the prophets, &c.*] “An observation well calculated to conciliate the attention of his Jewish readers. It would put the Jew upon inquiring.”—Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *Concerning his son.*] Christ is called the Son of God for two reasons : first, because this title is equivalent to that of Messiah, and was so understood by the Jews. See John i. 50. “Thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel.” Compare Mark i. 1, Luke iv. 41, xxii. 67, 70. Secondly, because he was raised from the dead and put into possession of an immortal life. See Acts xiii. 33, Heb. v. 5. In this view Christ is called the *first-born*, having been the first human being who was raised to immortality from the grave. Col. i. 15, 18, Heb. i. 6, Rev. i. 5. All believers, as heirs of the same inheritance, are also sons of God. John i. 12, Rom. viii. 14—17,

is, concerning the Messiah: for that is the appellation by which the Messiah was to be distinguished from other prophets. They were only servants, but he was a son. Heb. i. 1. Ch. I.

*Who by natural descent was of the lineage of David, but with respect to his inspiration, was miraculously distinguished as the Son of God*<sup>3</sup> Ver. A.

1 John iii. 2. Hence they are co-heirs with Christ, and he is the first-born among many brethren. Rom. viii. 29. These are the only senses in which the title Son of God is applied to Christ in the genuine apostolical writings.

<sup>3</sup> *Who by natural descent, &c.*] Literally, "according to the flesh,"—"according to the spirit of holiness," &c. The antithesis between *κατα σαρκα*, according to the flesh, and *κατα πνευμα ἁγιωσύνης*, according to the spirit of holiness, is obvious to every attentive reader. Some have supposed, that by the former the apostle means what is called the human nature of Christ, and by the latter his divine nature. But Dr. Doddridge justly rejects this interpretation, because, even upon orthodox principles, it is not agreeable to the style of the scriptures to call the divine nature of Christ the holy spirit. Mr. Locke by the "spirit of holiness" understands "that spiritual part of Christ which, by divine extraction, he had immediately from God," and in this interpretation Dr. Taylor concurs. But this by no means suits the connexion, nor the scope of the apostle's argument; for how can the resurrection of Christ prove, that the soul which animated his body was of a nature different from other human souls? The expression, spirit of holiness, or holy spirit, must therefore be taken in its common acceptation, of divine inspiration. The apostle's meaning then will be clear and obvious. By natural descent Christ is of the lineage of David, but by his inspiration he is the Son of God. *q. d.* As a man he is descended from David, agreeably to the predictions of the Jewish scriptures; but as a prophet he is distinguished (*ορισθευτος*, accurately marked out and defined. See Schleusner) from all others, as being entitled to the appellation of Son of God, or the promised Messiah. But what is the circumstance which so decisively demonstrates his right to this high distinction? It is the wonderful exertion of divine power in raising him from the dead. This extraordinary fact

Ch. I. *by his resurrection from the dead.* This illustrious person, the head of the new dispensation, as a man was descended from the family of David, as it was foretold that he should ; but as a prophet to whom the holy spirit was imparted without measure, he is entitled to the high distinction of Son of God. He is the very Messiah whom we have been taught by the prophets to expect. And if any inquire how this fact is to be ascertained, the answer is, By his resurrection from the dead. It is this wonderful act of divine power, exerted upon this eminent person, which clearly distinguishes him from all the prophets who were his predecessors, and elevates him to that matchless pre-eminence which entitles him to the rank and character of the Son of God ; being the only one of the human race who has been raised from the grave, and put into possession of a glorious and everlasting inheritance.

This appears to me to be the true meaning of the distinction which the apostle makes between

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abundantly proves the great superiority of Jesus to all preceding prophets, and establishes his claim to the character of the Messiah. Acts xiii. 33, " God hath fulfilled his promise in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ' Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' " And after his resurrection the former prophets are, by a bold and sublime figure, summoned to do homage to him, and to acknowledge him as their superior. See Heb. i. 6, Improved Version ; also Wakefield *in loc.* See likewise Mr. Lindsey's Second Address to the Youth at the Universities, p. 276, where the learned writer justly observes, that the words *by natural descent* will be found a more just translation of the apostle's words than the literal rendering of them, *according to the flesh.*

Christ being the son of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the spirit: an expression from which some would, without sufficient reason, infer, that the body of Christ was descended from David, but that the spirit which animated his body was of a rank superior to mankind; an interpretation which by no means suits either the connexion or the argument.

*Even Jesus Christ our Lord.* This distinguished messenger of God is no other than Jesus of Nazareth: he is the true Messiah, and him we acknowledge as our honoured master.

*Through whom we have received the favour of an apostleship*<sup>1</sup>. The apostle, like his master, was a messenger from God. It was indeed the privilege of Jesus to receive his commission immediately from God himself; but the apostle derived his authority through the medium of Jesus Christ, who appeared to him in the way to Damascus, and invested him with that honourable office, which he justly represents as a great favour, considering with what violence and malignity he had persecuted the church.

*For preaching obedience to the faith among all the Gentiles, for the sake of spreading his name*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Through whom—the favour of an apostleship.*] See Gal. i. 1. In the original, “favour and the apostleship,” a common hebraism. See Grotius and Wakefield.—Hence χάρις, grace or favour, is put for the apostolic office. Rom. xv. 15, 16; 1 Cor. iii. 10; Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 2, 7, 8. See Grotius and Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *For preaching obedience, &c.*] This is archbishop Newcome's version of the text. He observes that “St. Paul nu-

Ch. I.  
Ver. 5.

The apostle's elliptical and abrupt manner of expressing himself makes the construction of his sentences obscure ; but it is plain that he means to represent, that the great object of his apostolic mission was to preach the gospel to the heathen, and to invite them all, without any exception, to believe in Christ, and to accept and secure the blessings of the gospel by a faithful compliance with its requisitions. Thus he was employed to spread the name, that is, to extend the authority of Christ through all nations.

6. *Among which are ye also invited by Jesus Christ*'. The church at Rome probably consisted chiefly of converts from heathenism. They had formerly been as ignorant, as idolatrous, and as immoral as any

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turally calls the gospel the faith, as it was his chief purpose in this epistle to prove that faith was the sole condition of being admitted into the gospel covenant." *For the sake of his name.* See Acts ix. 16. To advance his cause, to promote his glory. Luke xxi. 12, Mark xiii. 9.—Newcome. Taylor.

<sup>1</sup> *Among which are ye, &c.*] Hence it appears, that the great body of Christians at Rome were converts from heathenism, who were probably instructed in the principles of Christianity by visitors from the Greek or the Asiatic churches. The converts at Rome, therefore, might be both numerous and of great renown (see ver. 8), though the Jews residing at Rome might know very little about them, and might hold them in great contempt. Acts xxviii. 21, 22. This consideration obviates Mr. Evanston's principal objection to the genuineness of this epistle. Evanston's *Dissonance of the Evangelists*, p. 307, second edition. It seems quite frivolous to ask, as this ingenious writer does, p. 309, Who preached the gospel at Rome before the apostle? Among the innumerable multitudes which were continually flowing to Rome from all parts of the world, some must have been Christians. These would undoubtedly be zealous in making proselytes, and in some instances probably successful. *Quo cuncta undique confluent, celebranturque.*—Tacitus.

of their neighbours ; but they had been invited by Christ, through the medium of his faithful messengers, to participate in the privileges of the gospel : they had accepted the invitation, and were entitled to all the privileges of the Christian community.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 6.

*To all in Rome, who are beloved of God, invited, and holy<sup>2</sup>, favour be to you and peace<sup>3</sup> from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>.*

7.

*Beloved of God*, in the apostle's language, expresses persons who are favoured with peculiar external privileges. In this sense Jacob is said to be beloved, and Esau to be hated, even before they were born, God having intended to impart privileges to the one which he would deny to the other,

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\* *Beloved—invited—holy.*] “ These are but different expressions for professors of Christianity.”—Locke. “ That the word saints comprehends the whole body of Christians, appears from Acts xxvi. 10 ; Rom. xii. 13 ; 1 Cor. vi. 1 ; Eph. iii. 8, and many other places. All Christians are thus called, because they are dedicated to God, 1 Cor. vii. 14, and because they profess a religion which tends to make them holy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. But those who were thus denominated might fall from personal holiness.”—Newcome. See also Dr. Taylor's judicious and excellent Key to the Epistles, chap. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Favour and peace.*] “ *χαρις και ειρηνη*, *favor et prospera omnia.*”—Grotius. “ all favour and felicity.”—Taylor. But the word *χαρις* (grace) is often used to express the Christian religion, which is the best gift of God to the world. John i. 17 ; Acts xiii. 43 ; Rom. vi. 14, 15 ; 2 Cor. i. 12, vi. 1. See Schleusner. The words, therefore, are probably a hendiadys, by which the apostle expresses his earnest desire that the Christians at Rome might all, without distinction, participate in all the blessings of the gospel covenant.

<sup>4</sup> *From God—and from Jesus Christ.*] From God as the primary cause, and from Jesus Christ as the great instrument and honoured messenger of the gracious purposes of God to man. Or “ from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” See Erasmus *in loc.*

Ch. I. Rom. ix. 13. The *invited*, or *called*, are those to  
Ver. 7. whom the blessings of Christianity have been proposed, and who have professed their acceptance of these gracious offers ; and the *holy*, or *saints*, are those who, by a public profession of their faith in the Christian religion, sanctify, that is, separate themselves from the idolatrous and unbelieving world, as a community consecrated to the one living and true God.

To *all* the members of this holy community who were then resident at Rome, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, the apostle in his introductory salutation wishes grace or favour, that is, the continual possession of the gospel, which is so called because it is the gratuitous gift of God ; and peace, which includes all the blessings which accompany, or which flow from, the sincere profession of Christianity. These inestimable blessings are derived from God, who acknowledges the endearing relation of a Father to all who believe in the Christian religion, for whom, if they are obedient, he has prepared an everlasting inheritance ; and they are transmitted to us by Jesus Christ, whom we honour as our master, and who is the faithful messenger of these joyful tidings.

The apostle's words might be rendered, " who is the Father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Christ is in a peculiar sense the Son of God, being the first-born from the dead ; and all who believe in him are also sons of God, because they are co-heirs with Christ of the same glorious patrimony,



into possession of which they shall in due time be introduced.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 7.

2. The apostle thanks God for their honourable profession of the Christian faith, and for their high reputation in the churches, and expresses his earnest desire to visit them, ver. 8—10.

*In the first place, I thank my God through Jesus Christ on account of you all, that your faith is celebrated through the whole world. For God, whom I serve with my spirit<sup>1</sup> in the gospel of his Son, is my witness how incessantly I make mention of you. Always in my prayers entreating that by some means<sup>2</sup> I might now at length, by the will of God, have a prosperous journey to visit you.*

8.  
9.  
10.

*Your faith is celebrated through the whole world.*

This circumstance proves that there were many Christians at Rome at the time when this epistle was written; that these were not all of them persons of mean rank and indigent circumstances, and that their character and conduct were creditable to their Christian profession.

8.

The apostle “thanks his God” for the prosperous state of the Christian doctrine at Rome: he rejoices in the prosperity of the Roman church,

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<sup>1</sup> *Whom I serve with my spirit,*] “to whom my mind payeth its religious service.”—Wakefield. “with my whole spirit.”—Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *That by some means*] Gr. “if by any means.” “that I may by some means at length, through the will of God,” &c.—Wakefield.

Ch. I even though he had not himself been honoured as the instrument of planting it.

Ver. 8. *I thank my God through Jesus Christ on account of you all.* The doctrine of Christ had taught him to extend his charity to all mankind, and to rejoice in the goodness of God to the believing Gentile, manifested in the dispensation of the gospel, equally with the believing Jew.

9. *God whom I serve with my spirit,* that is, sincerely, entirely, and affectionately, *in the gospel of his Son.* The life of the apostle was one continued act of religious worship. He had been appointed by God to the ministry of the gospel, and this was the great object to which his whole heart and soul was elevated, which occupied all his thoughts, his cares and labours.

*God is my witness how incessantly I make mention of you.* Ever since I heard of your faith and zeal, and spiritual prosperity, God knows I can hardly think or speak upon any other subject.

10. *Always in my prayers entreating that by some means I might now at length, by the will of God, obtain a prosperous journey to visit you.* I am eager to see you ; I have been importunate in my prayers to be permitted to visit you ; and I flatter myself that the time is not far distant, when my prayer shall be answered and my best wishes accomplished.

Such was the state of the apostle's mind ; ardently desirous to be permitted to preach the gospel in the great metropolis of the world, but resigned

to the disposal of Divine Providence, and waiting for the direction of heaven ; and, for the present, his prayer was denied, and the visit he so much desired to make was for wise reasons deferred.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 10.

3. The especial reason why the apostle desired to visit Rome was, that he might confer upon the believers there some spiritual gift for the confirmation of their faith, ver. 11, 12.

*For I earnestly desire to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift for your establishment ; that is, that while I am among you, we may be comforted together by our mutual faith, the faith of both you and me*<sup>1</sup>.

11.

12.

Spiritual gifts, such as the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and many others, which are detailed by the apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 8, were imparted by imposition of the hands of the apostles to the primitive converts, and were the principal means of converting unbelievers, and of confirming the faith of those who were initiated in the Christian doctrine.

The believers at Rome were in general destitute of these spiritual gifts, a proof that no apostle had hitherto visited the imperial city. The Christian

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<sup>1</sup> *Of both you and me.*] See Newcome, who observes, that " the apostle wishes to impart the gifts of the spirit, not to display his own power, but to establish his converts in the gospel. He is cautious of assuming." The primate argues from Rom. viii. 9, 16, xii. 6, that " some of the Roman converts had received the holy spirit ;" rather, perhaps, some who had received the spirit were then resident at Rome ; such, for instance, as Aquila and Priscilla.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 12. religion, therefore, must have been introduced by some teachers of an inferior order; perhaps by some pious believers who were not teachers by profession, and who, visiting the city upon commercial or other necessary engagements, had availed themselves of the opportunity to sow the precious seed of the gospel in a soil so well prepared, that it had soon produced a copious harvest. God is not limited in his choice of instruments, and the meanest talents are in his hands equally efficacious with the most splendid; nor should any proper opportunity of promoting the knowledge of truth and virtue be omitted even by those who are not teachers by profession; for who can say what incalculable benefit may be derived from a hint dropped in due season?

Paul was desirous of communicating some spiritual gift to the believers at Rome for the confirmation of their faith. This was the privilege of an apostle; but, lest he might appear to assume too much, he in part retracts his words, and represents the object of his proposed visit to be as much for his own benefit as for theirs: *that we may be mutually comforted by each others mutual faith.* How pleasing is this unaffected modesty in one so highly gifted and of such exalted rank!

4. As it was the main object of his apostleship to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he was particularly desirous to fulfill his ministry at Rome, and it had often been in his contemplation to visit the imperial city, ver. 13—15.

*Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I have often purposed to come to you, though I have been hindered hitherto, that I might gather some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise; so that I am ready, according to my ability<sup>1</sup>, to preach the gospel to you also who are at Rome.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 13.

14.

15.

The apostle was not his own master with respect to the course of his missionary journeys, and was no doubt often obliged to abandon the scheme which would have been most agreeable, for the sake of prosecuting that which would be most useful. He is, however, solicitous that it should be fully understood that his delay to visit Rome did not arise from any reluctance on his part to perform his duty there. He had received a commission which it was the first wish of his heart to fulfill; he was intrusted with the gospel, which it was his imperative duty and his earnest desire to communicate to all who were willing to receive it. It contained tidings of equal and infinite importance to all in every country and in every station; to the polite and to the rude, to the learned and to the unlearned. The gospel was freely offered to the poor, but it was not limited to them. It was with equal freedom and with equal earnestness addressed to the opulent, the wise, the powerful, and the honourable; and many of this description were professors of the Chris-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ready according to my ability.*] Gr. "that which is in me is ready." "as much as lieth in me I am ready."—Newcome.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 15.

tian faith in its earliest age. The apostle was willing and even eager to publish and defend the doctrine of his honoured master in the city of Rome itself, the august metropolis of the empire, and the residence of the imperial court.

5. This leads the apostle to express his triumph in the gospel revelation, and briefly to state the doctrine which he proposed in the progress of the epistle to assert and vindicate at large, ver. 16, 17.

16. *For I am not ashamed of this gospel*<sup>1</sup>; *because it is the power of God to salvation to every one who believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*
17. *For therein*<sup>2</sup> *the justification*<sup>3</sup> *of God by faith, is revealed to faith; as it is written, The just by faith shall live*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *This gospel.*] The received text adds, *of Christ*; but the word Χριστ (of Christ) is wanting in the earliest copies, and is omitted in the text of Griesbach.

<sup>2</sup> *For therein.*] I have given Dr. Doddridge's translation of this clause, which affords a clear sense to an obscure passage. Gr. "from faith to faith;" i.e. "wholly by faith."—Locke: not so correct as Doddridge.

<sup>3</sup> *Justification.*] "δικαιοσύνη, the original word, is often used by St. Paul for God's treating men as just or righteous, whether by admitting them into the outward privileges of the Christian church here, or into his heavenly kingdom hereafter."—Newcome. I choose to retain the theological word, justification, though it is somewhat old-fashioned; as, like the words faith, grace, and other theological words and phrases, it is used by the apostle to express combinations of ideas peculiar to himself, and which are not comprehended under any other single word in the English language.

<sup>4</sup> *The just by faith.*] See Hallet's 'Observations on Scripture,' vol. i. p. 15; and Rosenmüller *in loc.* The apostle here lays down, in brief, the main design of his epistle, viz. that all who believe in Christ are admitted into covenant with God, by which

*I am not ashamed of this gospel.* The doctrine of Christ at its first promulgation was an object of contempt, because it did not, like the philosophy of the schools, affect subtilties which the vulgar could not comprehend ; nor was it set off by a studied and ambitious eloquence. But it was held in scorn chiefly because its founder was a crucified Jew. In this despised doctrine the apostle had long been taught to place his confidence and glory ; for, in his present correct estimation, it was *the power of God to salvation to every one who believed.*—The doctrine of the gospel, however humble in its origin, was confirmed by the miraculous exhibition of divine power ; it saved those who received it from the bondage of the Mosiac Institute, and from the tyranny of heathen idolatry, and brought them into a state of light and liberty. This inestimable treasure was to be first offered to the Jews ; who, notwithstanding their many privileges, and their high opinion of themselves, stood in great need of it. It was also to be offered to the idolatrous Gentile ; who in this new order of things is to be admitted to equal privileges with the descendant of Abraham.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 16.

*For in it, the justification of God by faith, is revealed to faith.* The apostle through this whole epistle calls that state of privilege into which men are brought by the gospel, JUSTIFICATION. In the language of a Jew, a heathen, as such, is called a

17.

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they become entitled to eternal life, if their faith be practical and persevering.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 17. sinner, whatever his moral character may be: he is out of covenant with God. A Jew, being in a state of covenant, is holy. Under the new covenant, the heathen believer, as well as the Jew, is admitted into this holy state: from being a sinner he becomes a saint, selected and separated from the idolatrous and unbelieving world.

This justification, or state of privilege, is *by faith*; for by the profession of faith in Christ, a man is transferred from the community of sinners and heathen into the community of saints, and becomes entitled to the privileges of the Christian covenant. This doctrine, so important to our peace and comfort, is now *revealed* by the gospel: it was before unknown even to the Jews themselves: it was a mystery, hid from ages and generations, though it may be correctly expressed in the language of the prophet Habakkuk, ch. ii. 4, "He who is justified by faith, shall live;" that is, He who is by faith admitted into the community of believers, is already acquitted from the sentence of the law; and, if he improves his privileges, shall be entitled to eternal life.

This is one instance amongst many of the loose manner in which the writers of the Old Testament are quoted by those of the New. The passage in the original has no reference to the apostle's doctrine of justification; but the text is cited by him in a way of allusion, as the words of the prophet will aptly express the doctrine which the apostle now proceeds to establish.



The apostle having thus conciliated the attention of his readers by an affectionate and judicious introduction, proceeds now to the main business of the epistle.

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Ch. I.  
Ver. 17.

**T**HIS Epistle is divided, in the apostle's usual manner, into two distinct portions—the ARGUMENTATIVE or DOCTRINAL, and the PRACTICAL.

The ARGUMENTATIVE or DOCTRINAL portion of the epistle, which extends through the first eleven chapters, is arranged under four heads :

The apostle proves, I. That the gospel is the free unmerited gift of God to Jews and Gentiles, ch. i. 18,—v. II. That it is efficacious for the sanctification, and, III. for the comfort, of all who believe, ch. vi.—viii. IV. That the Jews, as a nation, are for the present rejected from their covenant state; but that this rejection is neither total nor final, ch. ix.—xi.

## PART THE FIRST.

THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION IS THE FREE UNMERITED  
GIFT OF GOD TO ALL MANKIND.

To prove this proposition the apostle argues, That none can claim the blessings of the gospel on the ground of right, ch. i. 18,—iii. Also, That

Ch. I. Abraham's privileges were a free gift, and not the reward of merit, ch. iv. He then digresses into an eulogium upon the excellence of gospel privileges, ch. v. 1—11. And he concludes this Part by arguing from the analogy of the Fall, ch. v. 12 to the end.

## SECTION I.

*The privileges of the gospel are a free gift, because neither Gentiles nor Jews could make pretensions to them upon the ground of having improved their antecedent privileges.* Ch. i. 18,—iii.

### CASE I.

*The case of the Gentiles.*

The Gentiles are not admitted to additional privileges on the ground of right. Ch. i. 18 to the end.

1. The wrath of God is denounced against all who wilfully transgress his moral law, ver. 18.

Ver. 18. *For the anger of God from heaven is revealed against all ungodly and unrighteous men<sup>1</sup> who restrain<sup>2</sup> the truth by unrighteousness.*

<sup>1</sup> Gr. "ungodliness or unrighteousness of men."

<sup>2</sup> *Restrain.*] "Κατεχω, detinco, moror, et ex adjuncto, impedio, prohibeo, cohibeo. Luke iv. 42; Philem. v. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 6."—Schleusner. "When that heaven-born captive would exert its energy upon their minds, and urge them to obey its dictates."—Doddridge. They not only did not allow truth its proper influence upon their own minds; but they unrighteously concealed the truth they knew, and deprived others of the benefit of its light and influence.

The anger of God is that just punishment which he will inflict upon impenitent offenders. God is never angry ; and the severest visitations of his justice are in every instance the result of infinite benevolence, under the guidance of perfect wisdom. But the apostle's language is accommodated to the imperfect conceptions of human beings.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 18.

The gospel is a dispensation of mercy ; yet it reveals, in the clearest and most explicit manner, the righteous judgements of God upon impenitent sinners. This awful doctrine is revealed from heaven by messengers divinely commissioned for this purpose.—Or, the expression may imply, that the anger of God will descend from heaven in that day, when God will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained.

The offence particularly specified by the apostle, is that of detaining the truth in unrighteousness ; of unjustly confining the celestial captive, and refusing to communicate those moral truths in which they were instructed, and which would be beneficial to mankind ; or disgracing the principles they professed by a vicious conduct. These charges applied equally both to the heathen philosophers and to the Jewish teachers ; and the apostle now proceeds to substantiate his charge against the former.

2. The evidence of the divine existence and attributes is so clear from the works of nature, that to be ignorant of them was inexcusable ; ver. 19, 20.

*Because what is to be known of God is manifest*

19.

Ch. I. *among them ; for God hath made it manifest to them*  
Ver. 20. *that they might be inexcusable. For his invisible*  
*attributes, even his eternal power and Godhead<sup>1</sup>,*  
*being considered attentively, have been discerned*  
*by his works from the creation of the world.*

All the notions which the most enlightened of mankind can form of the Supreme Being must be comparatively poor and inadequate. Yet, imperfect as they must be, they are of great practical importance ; and God has been pleased to make the evidence of his existence and attributes so conspicuous, that all persons, and especially those who profess to know more than the rest of mankind, must be inexcusable if they do not attain all necessary information upon this subject. For, from the very beginning of time, the eternity, the power, and the greatness of God are discoverable to every reflecting mind ; and the beautiful structure and harmonious arrangement of the visible creation naturally lead to the acknowledgement of an invisible and eternal cause.

How far the light of nature only, independently of divine revelation, would enable the honest and serious inquirer to form just conceptions of the attributes and character of the Supreme Being, is a problem of very difficult solution. It is plain that the heathen were in general grossly ignorant of God ; and that this ignorance was the principal source of

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<sup>1</sup> *Godhead.*] Mr. Lindsey translates " Providence," the word *Godhead* being liable to be misunderstood.—Lindsey's Second Address, p. 278.

those scandalous immoralities which were the disgrace of the idolatrous world. And, though many of the philosophers were better informed, so far from communicating the knowledge which they possessed, and endeavouring to enlighten and to reform the world, they wickedly concealed their knowledge; and, both by precept and example, they encouraged their countrymen in superstition and in vice. This is the conduct to which the apostle alludes, and which he most pointedly condemns.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 20.

3. The inconsistency and folly of the heathen philosophers, in countenancing and falling in with the popular superstitions, were most inexcusable and criminal, ver. 21—23.

*Because that knowing God, they have not glorified him as God; neither were thankful, but became vain in their reasonings, and their inconsiderate heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became foolish; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and of quadrupeds, and of reptiles.*

21.

22.

23.

The philosophers had some just conceptions of God; but they did not worship him, they did not love him, they did not obey him. They foolishly reasoned themselves into the persuasion, that it would be better to encourage and to join in the popular idolatry. Thus, professing to be the wise men of the world, the lovers and teachers of wisdom, they acted the part of the most consum-

Ch. I. mate folly, and in their practice were gross idolaters.  
Ver. 23.

These philosophers concealed the truth which they knew, and joined in the rites which they despised, because they thus escaped persecution; and they valued themselves upon their superior wisdom. But this selfish sinister wisdom the apostle justly pronounces to be egregious folly.

4. In consequence of this temporizing and dishonest conduct, they were permitted to abandon themselves to the most dishonourable vices, ver. 24, 25.

24. *Therefore God gave them up to impure affections, to dishonour their own persons by themselves; because they changed the true into a false God<sup>1</sup>, and offered religious worship and service to the creature, in preference to the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

“God gave them up to impure affections,” not by impelling them to vice, but by not interfering to alter the natural tendency of the course which they had chosen for themselves. They chose the worship of idols, with all its foolish and vicious consequences, and they were left to reap the fruits of their own folly: and what better could be expected, when they acted in contradiction to their better judgement and deserted the worship of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The true, &c.*] Gr. “the truth of God into a lie.” See Wakefield and Newcome.

greut Creator, who alone is worthy of the highest adoration and homage of all creatures, throughout all ages ? Amen.

Ch. I.  
Ver. 25.

5. For this criminal conduct God suffered the heathen, without excepting those who were in the highest reputation for wisdom, to degrade themselves by the most abominable crimes, ver. 26, 27.

*Therefore God also gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their females changed their natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise the males, leaving the natural use of the female, have been inflamed with desire towards each other; males with males doing that which is contrary to decency, and receiving in themselves the just reward of their error<sup>2</sup>.*

26.

27.

The crimes to which the apostle here alludes were the disgrace of the heathen world. They were practised and justified, not only by the vulgar, but by the learned, the wise, the polished, and the great. They were not only permitted, but authorized, and even required by their idolatrous ritual; and that the apostle has not overcharged the melancholy, miserable picture, is known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with the celebrated remains of Greece and Rome.

6. The apostle exhibits a sad detail of the vices of the heathen world, ver. 28—32.

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<sup>2</sup> Error,] i. e. idolatry. See Taylor, who refers in his note to

Ch. I.  
Ver. 28.

- And as they did not search after God so as to acknowledge him, God gave them up to an undiscerning mind<sup>1</sup>, to do those things which were not expedient<sup>2</sup>; being filled with all injustice, lewdness, wickedness, exorbitant affection<sup>3</sup>, malice; full of envy, murder, contention, fraud, malignity<sup>4</sup>; whisperers, slanderers, haters of God, violent<sup>5</sup>, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without consideration<sup>6</sup>, violators of contracts, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, acknowledging the divine rule of right, were not aware<sup>7</sup> that they who practise*

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Cicero *De Nat. Deor.*, and to his *Tusculan Questions*, for proof of the justice of the apostle's charge. See also Bos *Exercit. in loc.*

<sup>1</sup> *Undiscerning mind.*] So Wakefield. "Reprobate; a mind not to be approved of. It is properly used of adulterated coin."—Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Not expedient.*] "A meiosis for things most inexpedient and enormous."—Doddridge.

<sup>3</sup> *Exorbitant affection.*] Πλεονεξία. This is the sense in which the apostle commonly uses the word when discoursing concerning heathen idolatry; and it has been overlooked by the generality of translators. Compare Eph. iv. 19, v. 3; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 6; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11. See Hammond's note on Rom. i. 29, and Locke's excellent Notes on Eph. iv. 19, v. 3. "*De omni immoderata et nimia cupiditate, etiam de libidine venerea quandoque vocem hanc usurpari docuit.* Elsnerus *Obs. Sac.* v. 2, p. 218."—Schleusner.

<sup>4</sup> *Malignity.*] "Κακοχθεία: it consists in putting the worst construction upon every thing."—Newcome, from Aristotle.

<sup>5</sup> *Violent.*] "Injurious."—Wakefield. Τέξεις, personal injury.

<sup>6</sup> *Without consideration, &c.*] Ασυνετής: Bowyer suspects, that either this or the next word ασυνθετής, violators of contracts, should be dropped. The latter word Wakefield renders *morose*, "with whom there can be no harmony or friendly connexion."

<sup>7</sup> *Were not aware.*] With Mr. Locke I adopt the reading of the



*these things are worthy of death, and not only commit these crimes themselves, but even take pleasure in those who practise them.*

Ch. I.  
Ver. 32.

The wise men of the heathen world did not search after God so as to acknowledge him. All their theological inquiries terminated in vain speculations, which had no influence on their practice. They entered no protest against the popular superstitions which they held in contempt, but associated with the multitude in their idolatrous rites; therefore God gave them up to an undiscerning mind. Errors in practice led to errors in judgement, so that they could not discern right from wrong. And while they were pleading for what they judged to be decent and expedient, they came to conclusions the most remote from truth; and, instead of recommending universal benevolence, such as became the children of the great universal Parent, they taught the lawfulness of violating every relative and social duty; and exemplified their doctrine by their practice. So that hardly a vice can be named which did not find its advocates. They acknowledged, indeed, a rule of right, and admitted that rule to be of divine authority: not, however, understanding that death was the just punish-

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Clermont and some other copies, that they were not aware of the capital punishment denounced by the law; which reading seems to be required by the apostle's reasoning, the object of which is to prove that the Jews were the most guilty, because they not only were aware that these actions were criminal, but also knew that the law of God had expressly prohibited them, under pain of death,

Ch. I.  
Ver. 32. ment of sin. But at any rate they did not reckon those unsocial passions which produce quarrels and strife, and mischief, confusion and misery in the world, in the catalogue of vices. Many of these bad passions, such as hatred and revenge, were estimated by them as splendid virtues, which they openly practised themselves, and which they approved and celebrated in others.

From this correct, but melancholy representation of the wretched state of the heathen world, the apostle leaves his reader to draw the conclusion, what claim the heathen could allege, on the ground of merit and of right, to the blessings of the Christian dispensation.

## CASE II.

### *The Case of the Jews.*

Ch. II. The Jew has no better claim to the privileges of the gospel than the idolatrous Gentile, ch. ii. 1,—iii. 20.

1. The apostle, without expressly mentioning the Jews, argues from general principles the justice of punishing a man who, setting himself up as the judge of others, himself commits the crimes which he condemns in them, ver. 1—8.

The apostle had suffered very injurious treatment from his countrymen; but he always retained a sincere affection for them, and in his writings he generally treats them and their prejudices with the greatest tenderness that was consistent with fidelity.

This is particularly observable through the whole of this celebrated epistle. CH. II.

The Jews held the Gentiles in the utmost contempt, and were loud in their censures of the idolatry and vice of the heathen world. They would therefore be well pleased with the picture which the apostle had just drawn of the deplorable state of morals among those who professed to be the most enlightened and civilized of the heathen.

But it was the apostle's design to prove that the Jews themselves were in a state equally corrupt with the heathen, and still more inexcusable; and to the Jew nothing could be more offensive than this charge. The apostle introduces it therefore with great caution, and in such a form, that the Jew is led to acknowledge the justice of his conclusion before he is aware that it is applicable to himself; for the apostle, before he ventures to introduce the Jew by name, first establishes the general principle, that a man who officiously condemns others for crimes of which he is himself guilty, does by parity of reason condemn himself, and acknowledges that he is himself deserving of that punishment which he is so forward to denounce upon others. Having fully established this point, he turns short upon the Jew, and plainly tells him that he is the person to whom this argument applies.

*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man<sup>1</sup>, who-* Ver. 1.

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<sup>1</sup> *O man.*] Dr. Taylor remarks that “ the apostle addresses the Jews in a covert general way, and uses general

Ch. II. *soever thou art that judgest*<sup>1</sup>; *for wherein thou*  
 Ver. 1. *judgest another thou condemnest thyself, for thou*  
*who judgest doest the same things.*

Whether Pagan philosopher or a teacher of any other sect or nation, if thou condemnest in another the crimes of which thou art thyself guilty, thou art convicted out of thine own mouth, and no plea can avail thee in arrest of judgement.

2. *Now we know that the judgement of God is according to truth*<sup>2</sup> *against those who commit such things.*

It is a principle not to be denied by any one, that God will visit sin with condign punishment, whatever be the character or profession of the guilty person. God is righteous, and his decisions are perfectly impartial.

3. *And dost thou, O man, who judgest those who do these things, and who doest them thyself, expect that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?*

Canst thou, O teacher, of whatever character, sect, or country, who assumest the office of a judge, conscious and self-convicted as thou art, calculate upon escaping that righteous condemnation of God which thou art so ready to denounce upon others whose crimes are similar to thine own?

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terms, that the Jew may not too plainly see that he is speaking to him."

<sup>1</sup> *That judgest.*] "Ὁ κρινων, the Judger, is here very emphatical. It denotes more than simple judging. It implies assuming the character, place, and authority of a judge."—Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *Is according to truth.*] "will be without distinction."—Wakefield.

*Or dost thou despise the riches of his kindness<sup>3</sup>, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the kindness of God should lead thee to repentance?*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 4.

Dost thou treat divine patience and forbearance with contempt, instead of availing thyself of the opportunity which his rich mercy affords to repent of thy manifold offences? What astonishing folly and presumption in one of such high professions! who settest thyself up as a teacher and a judge.

*But by this hardness and impenitence of thy heart, thou treasurest<sup>4</sup> up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God, who will recompense to every man according to his works.*

5.

6.

Alas! these pretensions and this profession will be of little avail; for, however thou mayest flatter thyself, be assured that thy crimes will not escape either detection or punishment. Hypocrisy will only add to this offence, and aggravate thy condemnation in that day when God will manifest his displeasure against sin, and all men shall be treated, not according to their pretensions or professions, but in exact correspondence with their real character.

*To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eter-*

7.

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<sup>3</sup> Kindness—should lead.] See Newcome, and Professor Symonds's Expediency of revising the Translation, c. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Thou treasurest.] I follow the punctuation of Griesbach and Taylor.

Ch. II. *nal life. But to those who are contentious, and dis-*  
Ver. 8. *obedient to the truth*<sup>1</sup>, *but obedient to unrighteous-*  
*ness, indignation and wrath.*

The reward which God will bestow upon those who patiently persevere in a course of virtue, will be that everlasting honour and happiness in a future life, the hope of which has been the most powerful spring of action, and the most abundant source of consolation in their struggles through life. But, on the other hand, the most insupportable effects of the divine displeasure shall fall upon those who have acted contrary to their better knowledge; who though instructed in the rule of duty have lived in the practice of vice, whatever arrogant pretensions they may have made to be the favourites of heaven, or how loud and severe soever their censures may have been of others, who, though not possessing the same privileges, have not exceeded them in the commission of crime.

2. The apostle having argued the impartial justice of God upon general principles, now proceeds to apply his doctrine explicitly to the Jew as well as to the heathen; and particularly he expressly announces that the final distribution of rewards and punishments shall be allotted in exact correspondence with men's moral character, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, ver. 9—11.

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<sup>1</sup> *Disobedient to the truth.*] “who obstinately and pertinaciously dispute against the truth, and do not humbly and sincerely yield themselves to be governed by it.”—Taylor.

*Tribulation and anguish shall fall upon every soul of man who practiseth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek. But glory, honour and peace shall be to every one who practiseth good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 9.

10.

As though the apostle had said, To be plain with you, my brethren, I must frankly tell you, that the Jew who glories in his privileges is equally amenable to the divine tribunal with the despised Gentile. The man who perseveres in sin shall suffer adequate and insupportable punishment, whether Jew or Gentile, and indeed the Jew will be the greater sufferer, because he sins against superior light; and every one who perseveres in the practice of virtue, shall be put into possession of the promised reward, whether Jew or Gentile. If indeed the Jew by improving his privilege has attained a higher degree of moral excellence than others, but not otherwise, his reward will be proportionably great.

*For there is no respect of persons with God; who will deal with his rational offspring in due correspondence with their real characters, without regard to their external privileges and profession, and will no more spare the offending Jew than he will punish the virtuous heathen.*

11.

3. In the day of general retribution, every one shall be judged according to the tenor of the dispensation under which he hath lived, ver. 12 and 16.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 12.

*For as many as have sinned not being under a law<sup>1</sup> shall without a law perish; and as many as have sinned under a law shall by law be judged.*

A righteous God will make a just discrimination in the punishment of guilt; nor will he visit the sins of those who possessed imperfect degrees of moral information with the same severity with which he will punish those who offend against the clear light of divine revelation. Some sin against the obscure intimations of unassisted reason only, being destitute of the superior information communicated by a written law: their offences shall be punished in the way that reason may dictate. Others offend against a written and positive law which prohibits the crime and declares the penalty: by that law shall they be tried, and to its condemning sentence shall they be doomed.

16. *In that day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

There is a day coming, when the secrets of the heart shall be brought to light, and every man's character shall be made manifest. In that day God will allot the final condition of all mankind in exact correspondence to the truth of their character; and the gospel, which it is my honourable commission to publish to the world, announces that the me-

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<sup>1</sup> *Under a law.*] “ They who shall be found to have transgressed the mere light of nature shall not come under the same rule with such as have enjoyed an extraordinary revelation.”—Dr. Taylor, who considers ver. 13, 14, 15, as a comment upon the 12th.



dium through which this grand event is to take place is the Lord Jesus Christ, who may perhaps in some unknown and inconceivable manner preside in person as judge upon this solemn occasion<sup>2</sup>; and whose laws, as revealed in the gospel, will certainly constitute the rule of proceeding at this grand and final assize.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 16.

4. In a parenthesis<sup>3</sup> the apostle justifies the assertion which he had made, that men shall be judged

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<sup>2</sup> As in the language of prophecy, the prophet is sometimes said to do that which he only foretells, see Jer. i. 10, Rev. xi. 6, it is possible that when it is said that Christ will judge the world, the meaning may be no more, than that the world will be judged and the final state of mankind decided agreeably to the solemn declarations of his gospel; and this supposition would afford an easy explanation of those texts which represent not only the apostles, but Christians in general, as assessors with Christ in the final judgement: for they also bear their solemn and united testimony to the same important truth. This interpretation would also obviate the objections which some learned men have offered to the doctrine of the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, from the consideration of the extreme improbability that a mere human being should be appointed to the office of universal judge. It cannot however be doubted, that God is able to qualify any being for the office to which he may call him out, and he certainly will do it; and Dr. Priestley justly remarks, that they who make this objection do not sufficiently consider the wonderfully rapid progress in knowledge and in power which our Lord is necessarily making in the long interval antecedent to the day of judgement. Upon the whole, as the accomplishment of the prophecy can alone explain its awful import, our time will be better employed in preparing for the great event, than by indulging in random speculations upon a subject which we cannot comprehend. See Belsham's *Calm Inquiry*, Part I. Sect. x. 4. Dr. Priestley's *Letters to Dr. Price*, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Parenthesis.*] This parenthesis, for the sake of perspicuity, I have placed after ver. 16.

Ch. II. according to the tenor of the dispensation under which they have lived, ver. 13—15.

Ver. 13. *For it is not the hearers of a law<sup>1</sup> who are just in the sight of God, but the doers of a law will be justified.*

Some may perhaps flatter themselves, that because they are indulged with the light of divine revelation they are the favourites of Heaven and are sure of acceptance. This is a most dangerous error; for privileges are only valuable as far as they are improved, and render the possessors of them wiser and better.

14. *For when the heathen, who have not a law, perform by nature the duties of the law, these, not*
15. *having a law, are a law to themselves: who show the work of the law written in their hearts, by the concurring testimony of conscience, and by mutual reasonings accusing and defending.*

The apostle having affirmed, ver. 12, that as many as sin under the Mosaic law shall be judged by that law, establishes his proposition upon the principle that it is not the mere possession, but the just improvement of external privileges which entitles a man to the favour of God. Not the mere hearers of the law, whatever veneration they may profess for it, or whatever value they may set upon their privilege, but those who practise the precepts

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<sup>1</sup> *A law.*] The definite article is omitted in the Alexandrine and other ancient copies, and the connexion seems to require it.

which they hear, and they alone, shall be accounted righteous in the sight of God.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 15.

And having before asserted that the heathen, though ignorant of divine revelation and destitute of positive law, should nevertheless be punished for their crimes, he here justifies this assertion, by alleging the existence of a natural law in their own minds which approved virtue and condemned crime.

And first he argues from the actual existence of virtue in the heathen world. *For when the heathen, not having a law, perform by nature the duties of the law, these, not having a law, are a law to themselves, showing the work of the law written in their hearts.* In other words, the virtues of the heathen, who are ignorant of the revealed law, and who are prompted to them by the light of nature only, show that they possess a natural sense of right and wrong.

Their conscience also, bearing its concurring testimony, approving the right and condemning the wrong, is an additional proof that the work of the law is written in their hearts; or that the providence of God has so arranged their condition and circumstances, that without the aid of revelation they still possess the means of acquiring some knowledge of his moral law.

Also, their *mutual reasonings accusing or defending*. The great questions of morality were constant subjects of debate in the schools of the philosophers: what some asserted to be right, others condemned as wrong; and their discussions

Ch. II. brings his conclusion home to the Jew exclusively,  
Ver. 24. and directly charges him with being equally, and even more guilty than the untaught and despised heathen.

17. *Behold, thou bearest the name of a Jew.* Thou thinkest it an honour, as in truth it is, to be a descendant of Abraham and the other patriarchs to whom the promises were made.

*And reposest thyself on the law*<sup>1</sup>. Thou thinkest thy state secure, because thou art a member of that community to which a revelation was vouchsafed.

*And thou gloriest in God*<sup>2</sup>, as in a peculiar sense the God of your fathers and of your nation. Having declared himself in a special and appropriate sense the maker, the protector, the benefactor, the law-giver, and the sovereign of the Jewish nation.

18. *And thou knowest his will, and distinguishest things that differ, being instructed out of the law.* Thou hast not been left like the heathen to those doubtful conclusions to which the light of nature leads, but thou hast been taught by a revelation from heaven both what to do and what to avoid; and that not only as to moral, but likewise to ceremonial precepts. Thou hast been instructed by the law to distinguish between clean and unclean, holy and unholy, so as to be able to keep yourselves

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<sup>1</sup> *On the law.*] “Thou retest on the law altogether, looking no further.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *Gloriest in God,*] *i. e.* “you rejoice in him as the object of your hope and dependance; you praise or speak well of him; you account it your honour that he is your God, and that you worship him.” Taylor.

ceremonially pure, and separate from all other nations on the earth. Ch. II.

*And art confident that thou art thyself a guide of the blind<sup>3</sup>, a light to them who are in darkness, an instructor of the simple, a teacher of babes, having the form of true knowledge in the law.* Ver. 19.  
 Conceiving thyself to have attained a complete knowledge of God and duty from the law, which thou justly reverest as the standard of moral excellence and the perfect rule of duty, thou regardest thyself as eminently qualified to instruct the poor, ignorant, forlorn Gentile, whom thou hast been accustomed to regard as morally blind, involved in total darkness, and to treat with a supercilious and scornful air; as in comparison with thyself, a driveller and a child. 20.

In such terms as these it was customary for the Jews to express their contempt of the idolatrous heathen. It is easy, therefore, to judge how offensive the apostle's doctrine must have been, both when he charged them, as in the present instance, with crimes equal to, or even greater than those of the Gentiles whom they so much despised; and when he taught, as upon other occasions, that the believing Gentile was admitted to equal privileges with the believing Jew; while the great mass of

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<sup>3</sup> *Guide of the blind.*] “*Te esse a quo omnes gentes doceri possent.*”—“*Judæis hic ascribuntur, ex ipsorum judicio, tituli magnificentissimi, Gentibus, vilissima nomina.*” Grotius. “Blind, in darkness, foolish, babes, were appellations which the Jews gave to the Gentiles, signifying how much inferior to themselves they thought them in knowledge.” Locke.

Ch. II. upon these interesting topics are an additional  
Ver. 15. proof that the light of nature supplied them with means, however imperfect, of acquiring the knowledge of moral distinctions <sup>1</sup>.

It may be observed here that the apostle allows that the heathen, who are altogether ignorant of divine revelation, may nevertheless, from the light of nature and reason, acquire a knowledge of the moral law of God and live in the practice of its duties, so as to be approved and rewarded by his just and good Creator. How different were the apostle's views from the system of many modern Christians, who delight in debasing and degrading human nature, and representing the creatures of God as born into the world in a state of unalloyed depravity, and under a sentence of condemnation to eternal misery !

5. The apostle now directly charges the Jews as guilty of the very crimes which they imputed to the heathen, and with circumstances of superior aggravation ; and in support of his allegation he appeals to the testimony of the Jewish scriptures, ver. 17—24.

17. *Behold<sup>2</sup>, thou bearest the name of a Jew, and reposest thyself on the law, and gloriest in*

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<sup>1</sup> The interpretation here given of this parenthesis, and the illustration of the apostle's argument, are very ably supported by Dr. Taylor in his learned and judicious note upon the text.

<sup>2</sup> *Behold.*] The reading of many ancient and approved manuscripts is *ei ðe*, “ but if.” See Gricbach and Newcome, who both adopt it.

*God<sup>3</sup>, and knowest his will, and distinguishest things that differ<sup>4</sup>, having been instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou art thyself a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the simple, a teacher of babes, having the form of true knowledge<sup>5</sup> in the law. Thou then who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou who proclaimest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou who forbiddest to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou who gloriest in a law, dost thou by the transgression of that law dishonour God? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, as it is written.*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

The apostle having sufficiently prepared the mind of his Jewish readers by arguing upon general principles, equally applicable to Jews and Gentiles, now

\* This passage proves that the Jews prided themselves in their relation to God as in a peculiar sense their God, and shows how unlikely it was that the apostle should pass over this important circumstance in his enumeration of their privileges, Rom. ix. 4, 5. This consideration gives weight to the conjecture of Slichtingius, Whitby, and Taylor, as to the true reading of the fifth verse. See the Note on Rom. ix. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Distinguishest things that differ.*] This is the interpretation of Beza and of the margin of the public version. Erasmus and others prefer the common translation, "approvest the things which are excellent." "discernest the things that are excellent." Newcome. "capable of distinguishing exactly between things lawful and forbidden." Taylor.

<sup>5</sup> *The form of true knowledge.*] Gr. "the form of knowledge and truth." "Μορφωσις, a plan, delineation, a sketch, or outline of any thing. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Bos Exerit. p. 100." Doddridge. "who art furnished with the whole plan and system of divine knowledge, and of the truth contained in the law." Taylor.

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Ch. II.  
Ver. 20.

the Jewish nation, on account of their unbelief, were excluded from covenant with God, and were reduced to a state equally deplorable with that of the idolatrous Gentile whom he despised and hated. This was the source of the chief part of the persecution which the apostle suffered from his countrymen in the course of his ministry.

21. *Thou then who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* Thou who imaginest thyself capable of teaching the ignorant and forlorn Gentile the doctrines and requisitions of the law, canst thou not instruct thyself in the great end and design of the law ?

22. *Thou who proclaimest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou who forbiddest to commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?* Are you yourselves detected in violating the plainest precepts of the law ; and while you are teaching your heathen neighbours the great duties of honesty and chastity, and loudly declaiming against the contrary vices, are you convicted by your own consciences of the very crimes which you so ostentatiously condemn in others ?

*Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?* While you abjure idolatry as dishonouring God and his worship, do you equally dishonour him by denying him that worship which his law requires, and robbing his altar of its dues under the pretence of tradition ?

23. *Thou who gloriest in a law, dost thou by the transgression of that law dishonour God?* And

upon the whole is it not an undeniable truth, that while you make a boast of superior privilege, and hold the unenlightened Gentile in utter disdain, you are at the same time conscious, that by your own multiplied and aggravated offences you are disgracing a divine Institution, and bringing into contempt both the authority of the Law and the name and honour of God who gave it?

Ch. II.  
Ver. 23.

*For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen, as it is written.* To speak plainly and without any further circumlocution, I do allege and directly charge it upon you, the great mass of the Jewish nation, that by your notorious immoralities and crimes you have induced the Gentiles, who have no other means of judging of your Institute than from your conduct, to think meanly and to speak evil both of your Law and of your God, whom they necessarily regard as tolerating, if not authorizing, your flagitious conduct; and how indeed can they think or speak otherwise, if your character resembles the description which is given of it in your own sacred books?

24.

The apostle here proposed to introduce a number of passages selected from the Jewish scriptures which describe the wickedness of the Jewish people; but an objection occurring suddenly to his mind, he drops his argument for the present, and resumes it again at the tenth verse of the following chapter, the intermediate portion being occupied in discussing the collateral question.

That the apostle does not overcharge the moral

Ch. II.  
Ver. 24.

character of the Jews in this place, any more than he had done that of the heathen in the preceding chapter, is evident from the testimony of their own contemporary historian, Josephus, who declares that the wickedness of his countrymen was so great, that if they had not been destroyed by the Romans, he verily believes that God would have exterminated them by fire from heaven, like Sodom and Gomorrah, as a terrible example to the world.

6. The apostle interrupts the course of his argument in order to prove that as outward profession would be of no use to the vicious Jew, so the want of it would be no disadvantage to the virtuous heathen, ver. 25—29.

25. *For indeed circumcision is of use if thou perform the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law,*  
 26. *thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. If then the uncircumcision keep the righteous precepts of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?*

It cannot indeed be denied that a Jew has a great advantage over a heathen while he observes the precepts of the law; but if he transgress the law, his privilege is of no value, he reduces himself to the state of a heathen. Can it then be denied that if a heathen, who is destitute of Jewish privileges and professions, should under these disadvantages live in the practice of virtue, he will, by parity of reason, be in as safe and happy a state as if he had been born and educated a Jew?

*And shall not the natural uncircumcision, if it keep the law, condemn thee, who notwithstanding thy legal circumcision<sup>1</sup> art a transgressor of the law?*

Ch. II.  
Ver. 27.

Shall not the virtuous, though by the accident of birth unprivileged and uncovenanted heathen, by the rectitude of his conduct, notwithstanding great moral disadvantages, justify thy condemnation, O wicked Jew, who, notwithstanding thy birthright and peculiar privileges, art become an habitual and impenitent transgressor?

*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly,* 28.  
*neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly,* 29.  
*and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit,*

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<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding thine external circumcision, *τον δια γραμματος και περιτομης*, literally "thee, who by the letter and circumcision," as the public version renders it; *i. e.* who being literally circumcised, or circumcised according to the letter of the law. A hendiadys which Mr. Wakefield renders, "who hast a written rule of circumcision," and thinks it parallel to *υμεις δια της γλωσσης*, 1 Cor. xiv. 9, which he translates, "ye who speak with a different language." Archbishop Newcome translates the words, "who under the letter of circumcision." Dr. Taylor explains them, "who in presumptuous dependance upon an outward profession." It is obvious that the apostle in this context uses the abstract for the concrete: circumcision and uncircumcision for circumcised and uncircumcised, *i. e.* Jew and Gentile. It is not perhaps easy to ascertain whether the apostle means to express the Jew who lives under the law of circumcision, or who has been circumcised according to law. The general sense of the passage cannot be mistaken. It is a peculiar construction of the preposition *δια* in these two passages, which Mr. Wakefield, in his note upon 1 Cor. xiv. 9, says, "seems to have escaped all his predecessors, whether critics, translators, or interpreters."

Ch. II. *not in the letter*<sup>1</sup>, whose praise is not from men but  
Ver. 29. *from God.*

That man has very little reason to boast, who has no other pretensions to the divine favour than the circumstance of his being a descendant of Abraham, and early initiated into the community of the chosen people; for this is of no use without a virtuous life: but he is the true Israelite, in the only valuable sense of the word, who lives in the practice of those virtues and of that purity of heart and life which it was the main design of the law to inculcate, and of its rites to symbolize; and such an one, however he may be despised by those who value themselves on their outward privileges and profession, will be as highly approved by God, who searches the heart, as if his pedigree were without a blot, and his conformity to the ritual law were unimpeachable and without defect.

How earnestly and how forcibly does the apostle here plead the cause of the virtuous heathen; and how decidedly does he declare his superiority to the privileged but supercilious and unrighteous Jew! So little countenance does the Christian religion afford to that narrow-spirited doctrine, that the heathen, however virtuous, are excluded from salvation on account of their not believing in the gospel, of which they had never heard.

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<sup>1</sup> *The letter,*] i.e. not externally according to the letter of the law, but internally by purity and self-denial, of which circumcision is the symbol. See ver. 27.

7. The apostle shows, that though the Jew Ch. III.  
might forfeit his privileges by his crimes, the advantages he possessed were nevertheless real, and of high importance, ch. iii. 1—9.

It was natural for the Jew, after he had been taught that the virtuous Gentile would be raised to a level with the privileged Jew, and that the vicious Jew would be degraded to a state worse than that of the ignorant heathen, to inquire what was the value of Jewish privileges, and what the superiority of a holy to an uncovenanted and unholy state. The apostle had indeed, ch. ii. 25, introduced his remarks upon the precedence which he claims for the virtuous Gentile over the wicked Jew, with observing cursorily, that the profession of Judaism was indeed advantageous to the virtuous Jew; but the complete discussion of this point he had reserved. He now resumes the subject, and discusses it in the dialogue form, introducing a Jew urging objections, to which he makes replies<sup>2</sup>.

[1.] The Jew demands to know in what his pre-eminence consists, ver. 1.

*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is* Ver. 1.  
*the benefit of circumcision?*

You say that circumcision is an advantage, if we keep the law; and yet you tell us, that the virtuous heathen is upon a par with us. What, then, is the

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<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Taylor's admirable Commentary upon this paragraph.

- Ch. III. use of the Jewish peculiarity, or the advantage of the  
 Ver. 1. Jew above the heathen ?

[2.] To this question the apostle returns a pertinent answer, ver. 2.

2. *Much every way*<sup>1</sup>: chiefly, because the oracles of God were intrusted to them<sup>2</sup>.

The advantages possessed by the Jewish nation are numerous. I shall reserve the detail to another opportunity (see chap. ix.): at present I shall only mention the chief; namely, that to this chosen people were committed the sacred records of divine appearances, the law and the prophets, the rule of duty and its awful sanctions, the promises and the threatenings, and particularly those great promises relating to the Messiah, and the invaluable blessings which through him would be communicated to all the nations of the earth. These are surely

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<sup>1</sup> "There is always," says Dr. Priestley in his excellent note upon this text, "a real advantage in superior knowledge; because it puts it into men's power to become greater and happier than they could have been without that knowledge. It is a true maxim of Lord Bacon, that knowledge is power; and if this be the case with respect to natural knowledge, it is much more so with respect to religious knowledge. A true knowledge of God, of his perfections and moral government, of the conditions on which we live here, of the proper duties of life, and of our expectations after death, is such knowledge as tends most of all to ennoble men's minds, to enlarge their views, and thereby make them superior beings to those who have never been taught to look any further than the present world, who have no knowledge of the true end of their being, and of the government under which they live."

<sup>2</sup> "were confirmed to them by proof." Wakefield, who refers to Gen. xlii. 20.



very important privileges, and powerful incentives to duty, whether they are improved or not.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 2.

[3.] The Jew proposes a second objection, ver. 3.

*But what if some have proved unfaithful, shall their unfaithfulness annul the faithfulness of God?* 3.

Shall God cast us off as a nation, because some of us have transgressed his covenant and been disobedient to his laws? Will the guilt of some entail the rejection of all; and release the Almighty from the obligation of his own promise?

[4.] The apostle again returns a satisfactory reply, ver. 4.

*Far from it<sup>4</sup>. Yea, let God be acknowledged faithful, though every man should be false. As it* 4.

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<sup>3</sup> "The term faith," says Dr. Priestley, "has two significations, viz. mere belief or assent to truth, and also fidelity, faithfulness, or being true to a promise or engagement. This apostle, as well as other ancient writers, seems to have been too fond of what we now call a play upon words, using the same term in different senses; which, though it may sometimes amuse and entertain, yet too often misleads, the reader. In the former part of this verse, the word faith is used in the first of the above-mentioned senses, viz. for mere belief; and in the latter part in the second of them, viz. fidelity." Dr. P. also observes, that in ver. 5 there is a similar play upon the words righteousness and unrighteousness.—Dr. Taylor, however, does not allow this ambiguity in the present case, but assigns corresponding meanings to the original words in both clauses of the sentence, viz. faithfulness and unfaithfulness; *i. e.* adherence and treachery to stipulated engagements.

<sup>4</sup> *Far from it.*] Μη γενοιτο, Let it not be; in the public version, God forbid. Dr. Taylor translates it, By no means; and so Wakefield.

Ch. III. *is written*<sup>1</sup>, *That thou mightest be justified in thy*  
 Ver. 4. *declarations, and mightest prevail when thou art*  
*called to account.*

*q. d.* I never said, I never insinuated, that all would be condemned for the transgressions of a few. No: if God rejects all, it is because all have transgressed; and under these circumstances the punishment of all would be no impeachment of the faithfulness of God. But the words of the Psalmist, Psalm li. 4, upon another occasion, would be strictly applicable in the present case; and the divine perfections would be abundantly justified in the severest measures of his government.

[5.] The Jew proceeds to urge another objection of so bold a nature, that the apostle thinks it necessary to thrust in a caution, that he is not writing in his own person, but in the character of a cavilling Jew, ver. 5—7.

5. *But if our unrighteousness recommend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Would not God be unrighteous for inflicting punishment?*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *As it is written*] in Ps. li. 4. The apostle quotes from the LXX., and applies the passage as a general maxim, that the dispensations of God, when brought to the test, will always be found to correspond with his declarations; so that if the Divine Being is brought to the bar, he will be sure of an acquittal, and will come off victorious after a fair, however rigid, trial. See Doddridge *in loc.* Elsner's *Observ.* v. 2. p. 18, 19. Bos *in loc.* Dr. Taylor thinks, that though the apostle quotes from the LXX., he argues from the Hebrew; which is not probable.

<sup>2</sup> *For inflicting punishment.*] See Wakefield.

Would not God be unjust, and would it not be a violation of his promise, to punish us for our transgressions, and cast us out of his covenant,—when our wickedness would afford him an opportunity of displaying his own faithfulness to greater advantage?

Ch. III.  
Ver. 5.

The apostle, aware of the immoral tendency of this objection, interrupts the course of it to warn his reader that he is writing under an assumed character, ver. 6.

*I speak as a man<sup>3</sup>. By no means; for how shall God judge the world?*

6.

Recollect that I am not writing in my own person, but under a fictitious character. I am urging the objection of a cavilling Jew, who argues that his nation ought not to be rejected; because, the worse they are, the more would the goodness of God be magnified in keeping his promise—than which nothing can be more unreasonable and immoral. It would destroy at once all the sanctions of virtue; for, if the more wicked men are, the better is their title to divine mercy, there is an end of all moral government and righteous retribution.

Having thus cautioned his reader, the apostle pursues the adversary's objection, ver. 7.

*For if the faithfulness of God has abounded more to his glory by my unfaithfulness, why am I still condemned as a sinner?*

7.

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<sup>3</sup> *I speak as a man.*] “I speak freely, as with a man.” Wakefield. “Here I represent the reasoning of an unbelieving Jew.” Taylor, more properly.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 7.

Why am I not rather approved and rewarded for my unbelief, which affords so glorious an opportunity to the Divine Being, of manifesting his infinite and unchangeable faithfulness?

[6.] To this impious objection the apostle makes an indignant reply, ver. 8.

8. *And, why dost thou not add <sup>1</sup>, as we are maliciously reported, and as some affirm that we teach, Let us do evil that good may come? whose condemnation is just.*

Why do not you speak out? Why do not you act up to the principle which you advance, and which our enemies most falsely and injuriously impute to the teachers of the Christian doctrine? If the mercy of God and his faithfulness to his promises are magnified in proportion to the magnitude and multiplicity of your offences, why do not you say at once, Let us yield to every temptation, let us hesitate at no enormity; for our crimes only afford the Divine Being a more favourable opportunity of displaying his mercy? Absurd, abominable doctrine! Justly, indeed, are they who admit and who act upon these odious principles, liable to that righteous condemnation, to that insupportable doom, which they thus insult and defy.

The apostle here shows the folly of the principle upon which his opponent argues, by reducing it to

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<sup>1</sup> *Why dost thou not add.*] “why dost thou not then say.” Wakefield. “why do you not draw this into a general rule and maxim.” Taylor.

an absurdity ; and by showing the impious and immoral consequences to which it necessarily and directly leads.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 8.

The apostle complains that his enemies charged him with teaching licentious doctrine ; probably founding their charge upon a misapprehension, not uncommon in modern times, of his doctrine of justification by faith without works : by which he meant nothing more than that by faith in Jesus as the Messiah, they were admitted into the Christian community, without submitting to the Jewish ritual ; but which his opponents understood, or pretended to understand, as preaching up pardon and salvation through faith in Christ, unconnected with the practice of virtue. This he justly represents as a base calumny upon himself and his associates ; and solemnly denounces the judgements of God upon those who hold, and who act upon, such nefarious principles.

Thus we see that it is no new thing for those who profess or who teach the pure unadulterated doctrine of the gospel to be charged with sapping the foundations of morality ; nor ought such to be discouraged by these calumnies from the firm and faithful discharge of their duty. So persecuted they the prophets and apostles who were before them. Let them put to silence and to shame the insinuations of malice and the clamours of calumny, by the purity of their doctrine and the sanctity of their lives.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

[7.] The Jew now proceeds to put his final question, ver. 9.

*How then<sup>1</sup> ? are we better than they ?*

You allow that our moral advantages are superior to those of the heathen, and we cannot but admit that we have not improved them to the utmost ; but surely you will agree, that in a general view the privileged Jews excel the ignorant and idolatrous heathen both in knowledge and in virtue, and therefore have a better claim to the privileges of the gospel ?

[8.] To this question the apostle gives a decided negative, which brings him back to the point from which he had digressed, ver. —9.

—9. *No, not at all : For we have before proved, that Jews and Gentiles are all in a state of sin.*

I can by no means allow that your moral state is in any respect superior to that of the idolatrous heathen, so as to give you any claim to further privileges. For though your advantages have been many and great, I have already plainly shown, that you have altogether forfeited your privileges by your

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<sup>1</sup> *How then ?*] Τί οὖν in a dialogue, and when τί has no following substantive to agree with it, is a form of introducing another question or objection by the inquirer. See Dr. Taylor's learned note on ver. 3. He further observes, in his note on ver. 9, "That the apostle in his arguments considers Jews and Gentiles as a body in their collective capacity, and that he is arguing for a justification agreeable to such a capacity : *q. d.* Well ; but have not we Jews a better claim than the Gentiles to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God ? "

crimes ; and I am now about to prove, by an induction of particulars, that your own scriptures confirm the just but melancholy representation.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 9.

This brings the apostle back to the point from which he had digressed at the 24th verse of the preceding chapter ; and, taking up his words again, he pursues the course of his argument, by alleging the testimony of their own scriptures.

8. The apostle, returning from his digression, confirms his description of the Jewish nation by the testimony of the Jewish scriptures, ver. 10—20.

*As it is written, “ There is none righteous ; no, not one.”* 10.

At the 24th verse of the preceding chapter, the apostle had directly charged the Jews with having excited the indignation of the heathen by their scandalous immoralities. He adds, “ as it is written ;” meaning to confirm his charge by testimonies from the Old Testament. But, an objection occurring to his mind, he drops his main argument, till after he has discussed it ; and this discussion being finished, he now resumes his argument, by taking up the words which he had used when the interruption took place. Similar parentheses are not unfrequent in the apostle’s writings, and add greatly to the obscurity of his style<sup>2</sup>.

This collection of texts is taken from different

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<sup>2</sup> A very remarkable parenthesis occurs in the Epistle to the Ephesians, of the whole third chapter.

Ch. III. passages<sup>1</sup> in the scriptures of the Old Testament ;  
Ver. 10. perhaps with a design to show, that the Jews in every age had been a disobedient people.

The intention of the apostle is to prove, that the Jews as a nation had by their wickedness forfeited their claim to the privileges of a peculiar people ; and therefore, that they possessed no better title to the blessings of the gospel than the idolatrous heathen.

The argument is properly national, not personal. Among profligate Jews and idolatrous heathen there might be some illustrious exceptions ; some eminent examples of virtue, amidst great and prevailing degeneracy. But considered as a body, both Jews and heathen were 'a disobedient and wicked race : so far from meriting by their conduct an extension of their privileges, they were justly obnoxious to condemnation by the law of the respective dispensations under which they lived.

—10. “ *There is none righteous ; no, not one.*”

There is not an individual who can plead that he has himself so fully complied with all the requisitions of the law, as to be in a strict and legal sense

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from different passages ;] viz. ver. 10—12 from Psalm xiv. 1—3 ; ver. 13 from Psalm v. 9, cxl. 3 ; ver. 14 from Psalm x. 7 ; ver. 15—17 from Isa. lix. 7, 8 ; and ver. 18 from Psalm xxxvi. 1.—In some copies of the LXX. all the verses are found together in the fourteenth Psalm, which has very much the appearance of interpolation. The apostle, probably without any particular reason, set down these passages as descriptive of the Jewish nation collectively, and by no means as applicable to any individual.



perfectly innocent and free from every offence in Ch. III.  
heart and life.

*“ There is no one who understandeth ; there is none who diligently seeketh after God.”* Ver. 11.

None have formed just conceptions of the Divine character and government ; none have taken the pains they ought to have done to acquire that right knowledge upon these interesting subjects which is contained in the Law and the prophets.

*“ All are turned aside : they are altogether become unprofitable : there is none who practiseth goodness ; no, not even one.”* 12.

All are transgressors of the divine law. Instead of loving and doing good to others, they have neglected and abandoned their neighbour when he wanted their aid. In short, there is not one, not a single individual, who has fully performed his duty<sup>2</sup>.

*“ Their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have deceived : the venom of asps is under their lips.”* 13.

They deal so largely in fraud, falsehood, and

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<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to say to whom the original description was intended by the Psalmist to be applied : surely, not to every individual Israelite in his day, nor even to the majority of his countrymen : perhaps he refers to his enemies only, who opposed his accession to the crown. He might possibly have too bad an opinion of his countrymen ; as it is plain that Elijah had, who, when complaining of the universal degeneracy of his countrymen, was rebuked by the oracle, and told that Israel contained seven thousand pious worshipers of the true God who had not bowed their knee to Baal, 1 Kings xix. 18 ; and David himself acknowledges, in Psalm cxvi. 11, that it was “ in haste ” that he said “ All men are liars.”

Ch. III. calumny, that their very breath is tainted, like the  
Ver. 13. effluvia of an open grave, or the venom of a viper.  
It is dangerous to approach them.

14. “ *Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :*

15. *their feet are swift to shed blood.*”

They give vent to their malignant passions by the bitterest execrations ; and where they have opportunity, they do not hesitate to gratify their revenge in the blood of those who have offended them.

16. “ *Ruin and misery are in their ways : and the*  
17. *way of peace they have not known.*”

All their thoughts and purposes against those who are the objects of their resentment, are revenge and mischief : and as to measures of peace and reconciliation, they never occur to their thoughts.

18. “ *The fear of God is not before their eyes.*”

This is the more surprising, considering how liable they are themselves to the righteous judgement of God, for their own multiplied transgressions. But this they do not regard ; and, laying aside all apprehension of a future judgement, they are determined to gratify their malignant and revengeful passions, whatever may be the consequence.

19. *Now we know, that whatsoever the law saith*<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> None of these passages are to be found in the writings of Moses : by the *Law*, therefore, the apostle must mean the Scriptures of the Old Testament. See Doddridge. Dr. Priestley, in his judicious note upon this text, observes “ that neither with respect to Jews nor Gentiles could the great mass or

*it speaketh to those who are under the law : so that every mouth is stopped<sup>2</sup>, and the whole world stands convicted before God.*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 19.

You will observe that all these passages which I have recited, have been taken from the sacred books of the Jews ; they must therefore be considered as descriptive of the character of Jews : the heathen have no concern in them. But if such be the character of the Jews as a nation, as it is described by their own writers, there can be no doubt, that in the sight of God they are equally guilty with the heathen ; and if arraigned at the divine tribunal, both Jew and Gentile must stand alike speechless, and are equally obnoxious to the righteous judgement of their Maker.

It is observable here, that the word Law is put for the Jewish scriptures in general, none of these passages being quoted from the Pentateuch, but all of them from the Psalms or the prophets.

How far the apostle's argument is strictly logical, may be doubted. The scope of it seems to be this : Your own writers give such a description of

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bulk of the people have consisted of such profligate characters as the apostle describes ; for then society could not have subsisted. But what is of chief importance, though not mentioned by the apostle, is, that some of the worst vices which he here enumerates were connived at in the worship of the heathen gods, whereas all impurity as well as cruelty was forbidden in the laws of Moses ; so that when the Jews were guilty of those vices, they were much more criminal than the Gentiles, whose very religion favoured them."

<sup>2</sup> So that every mouth is stopped.] " So *iva* and the rest following should be rendered. 1 Cor. vii. 29 ; 2 Cor. i. 17 ; Gal. v. 17 ; Eph. ii. 9." Taylor.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 19.

the wickedness of your nation in their time, as must necessarily lead to the conclusion, that men of such a character had justly forfeited all the privileges of the Mosaic covenant. But you will not pretend that the Jews of the present day are better than their ancestors in the time of David and the prophets. Consequently, they also have forfeited all their peculiar privileges, and stand at present upon no better ground than the idolatrous and despised heathen.

It may, however, reasonably be doubted, not only whether the cited passages were applicable to every individual, but whether they were intended by the respective writers to apply to the Jews as a nation, in the age in which they lived. The fact, however, is certain, that the character of the Jewish nation at the time when the apostle wrote, was in the highest degree profligate.

9. The apostle draws his grand conclusion, ver. 20.

20. *Therefore, by the works of a law shall no flesh be justified in his presence; for by a law is conviction of sin*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Conviction of sin.] So Wakefield, *ἐπιγνώσις*, *perfectior et exactior scientia*. Acts xxiv. 8. “*ἐπιγνώσκεις*, *de judice adhibetur, qui ex reo, quæstione habita, veritatem accusationis cognoscit*.” Schleusner. The law so clearly defines the nature of sin, that no one can doubt of the guilt of the offender, and of his liahness to punishment. “Law is so far from giving them a title to blessings, that it only discovers their sin, as deserving of God’s wrath.” Taylor.

Neither Jew nor Gentile can plead a right to the privileges of the gospel upon the ground of law; for the Gentiles having been proved to be transgressors of the law of nature, and the Jews of the law of Moses, law now serves no other purpose than the conviction of both parties, and leaves the whole human race under a sentence of condemnation, with no other refuge or dependance than the divine mercy.

This is the important conclusion, to which it was the apostle's design to lead his readers. He humbles the haughty and supercilious Jew to a level with, if not an inferiority to, the despised Gentile; that so, being equally indebted to the Divine mercy for the blessings of the gospel, he may possess no claim to superiority under the new dispensation.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 20.

### CASE III.

#### *Jews and Gentiles united.*

The apostle shows that faith alone, without the works of law, is the common and the only ground of admission to the privileges of the gospel, both to Jew and Gentile; which necessarily excludes all pleas of merit, and all claims to superiority, in those who are thus received. Ch. iii. 21—31.

1. God of his own free mercy has communicated the blessings of the gospel, through Jesus Christ, to Jew and Gentile without distinction, ver. 21—26.

Ch. II.  
Ver. 21.  
22.

*But now, the justification of God, independently of law<sup>1</sup>, (even that justification of God by faith in Jesus Christ which was attested by the law and the prophets,) is manifested to all<sup>2</sup> who believe. For*  
 23. *there is no distinction: inasmuch as all have sinned,*  
 24. *and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption*  
 25. *which is by Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth as a mercy seat<sup>3</sup> in his own blood<sup>4</sup>, for the*

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<sup>1</sup> *Independently of law.*] See Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *To all.*] The received text adds, "and upon all:" but these words are omitted in the Alexandrine and other ancient copies, are disapproved by Griesbach, and obscure the sense.

<sup>3</sup> *A mercy seat.*] ἱλαστήριον. This word uniformly signifies the mercy seat wherever it occurs, both in the Old Testament and the New, and is every where rendered by that word in the public Version; and so it ought to have been translated here. See Exod. xxv. 22; Numb. vii. 8, 9; Lev. xvii. 2; Heb. ix. 5. The mercy seat was the golden lid of the ark of the covenant, upon which the Shechinah or cloud of glory rested, and from which oracles were dispensed. Christ is compared to the mercy seat, as "it is upon him," says Dr. Taylor, "the grace of God takes its stand, erects its throne, and is declared and is dispensed to us."

<sup>4</sup> *In his own blood.*] That is, the blood of Christ himself. "The atonement under the law was made by blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. Christ, says St. Paul, is now shown by God to be the real propitiatory, in his own blood. See Heb. ix. 25, 26." Locke. Lev. xvi. 13, 14, Aaron is required, on the day of atonement, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed bullock and goat upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. Christ, being represented both as priest and victim, is here described as sprinkling and consecrating the mercy seat with his own blood. The received text reads, "by faith in his blood;" but the words *δια της πίστεως*, by faith, are wanting in the Alexandrine manuscript, and are probably spurious. Dr. Taylor, though he retains the words, observes, that "faith in Christ's blood is a mode of expression which occurs no where in Scripture but in this place:" probably, therefore, it did not originally occur here.

*declaration of his method of justification, with respect to the remission of sins already committed, through the forbearance of God: for the declaration, I say, of his method of justification at this present time, that he might be just<sup>5</sup> and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus<sup>6</sup>.*

Ch. III.  
Ver. 25.

26.

For the perfect understanding of this difficult passage it is necessary to remember that sin, in a technical sense in the apostle's writings, signifies a state of exclusion from the covenant of God, and from its privileges and promises; and sinners are those who exist in an uncovenanted state. Such was the state of the Gentile world by nature, and of the Jews by transgression.

In contradistinction to this, righteousness in a technical sense signifies a covenant or holy state, and justification expresses the means by which sinners are brought into this state; and they are righteous or holy who have been introduced into a covenant state, and who are made partakers of its privileges, promises, and blessings. Such were the Jews under the Mosaic dispensation, and believers under the gospel.

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<sup>5</sup> *Might be just :*] *i. e.* "to all his creatures ; admitting them into the outward privileges of the Christian church upon this sole condition, that they believe in Jesus Christ." Newcome. *Just and the justifier :* *q. d.* the just justifier, the equitable, the impartial dispenser of mercy to all who believe, of whatever nation or description.

<sup>6</sup> *Who believeth.*] *Gr.* "who is of the faith of Jesus." See Gal. iii. 7, 9. *Οἱ ἐκ πίστεως*, they who are of faith, *i. e.* they who expect justification by faith. See also Rom. iii. 30. *Περιτομῶν ἐκ πίστεως*, the circumcision who believe. Vide Mr. Wakefield's note.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 26.

There are two ways by which men may be supposed to obtain admission into the gospel covenant. The first is by a claim of right on the ground of merit, because they had fully improved their antecedent blessings, the Gentile his law of nature, and the Jew the dispensation of Moses. These claims the apostle has completely refuted: the only remaining mode of admission, therefore, is by free grace or favour, through faith in Jesus as the Christ, offered by the unmerited mercy of God equally to Jew and Gentile, without any regard to the requisitions of antecedent law. This doctrine the apostle proceeds to illustrate.

21. *But now, the justification of God, independently*  
22. *of law, (even that justification of God by faith in Jesus Christ which was attested by the law and the prophets,) is manifested to all who believe.*

The claim of right is cancelled: Jew and Gentile are equally sinners; they are equally cast out of covenant privileges, and equally liable to condemnation. But God has not left his frail and fallen creatures without help and without hope. He is even now, at this very time, inviting them to enter into a covenant state. He is publishing that new and gracious dispensation to which the law of Moses points, and which the prophets of former ages have foretold. He has chosen and constituted Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah; and all who believe in and obey him as such, are received into the new covenant, and admitted to the privileges of sons of God, without any regard



whatever to **any** previous institute or dispensation Ch. III.  
under which they may have lived.

*For there is no distinction: inasmuch as all* Ver. 23.  
*have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

I say all, without exception; for there is no difference between the privileged Jew and the unprivileged Gentile, both parties having equally transgressed their respective institutes, having equally failed in their duty to God, having equally forfeited their antecedent privileges, and being equally obnoxious to the sentence of the violated law.

*Being justified freely by his grace, through the* 24.  
*redemption which is by Christ Jesus<sup>1</sup>.*

All who believe in Christ are raised from a state of condemnation to a state of life, liberty, and privilege: but not by any antecedent merits of their own. Far from it. They are introduced into this

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<sup>1</sup> *Redemption which is by Christ Jesus.*] "That redeeming," says Mr. Locke in his excellent note upon this passage, "in the sacred Scripture language, signifies, not precisely paying an equivalent, is so clear, that nothing can be more. I shall refer my reader to three or four places amongst a great number, Exod. vi. 6; Deut. vii. 8, xv. 15, xxiv. 18. But if any one will, from the literal signification of the word in English, persist in it against St. Paul's declarations, that it necessarily implies an equivalent price paid, I desire him to consider to whom; and that if we will strictly adhere to the metaphor, it must be to those whom the redeemed are in bondage to, and from whom we are redeemed, viz. sin and Satan. If he will not believe his own system for this, let him believe St. Paul's words, Tit. ii. 14, 'who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.' Nor could the price be paid to God in strictness of justice, (for that is made the argument here,) unless the same person ought, by that strict justice, to have both the thing redeemed and the price paid for its redemption. For it is to God that we are redeemed. See Rev. v. 9."

Ch. III.  
Ver. 24.

new and happy state by the free, unpurchased, unmerited mercy of God, who for this purpose has appointed Jesus of Nazareth to be the great deliverer of Jew and Gentile, of bondage and misery, by publishing to the world the joyful tidings of pardon and peace.

Redemption is deliverance from bondage. In its primary sense, by purchase; but frequently, by any other means. The Gentiles were in servitude to idolatry and vice, and the Jews to the law and to pharisaic tradition. From this servitude they are redeemed by Christ. How? Not surely by paying an equivalent; but by the declarations of mercy in the gospel, as the apostle himself explains it in the verse immediately following.

25. *Whom God hath set forth as a mercy seat in his own blood, for the declaration of his method of justification, with respect to<sup>1</sup> the remission of sins already committed, through the forbearance of God.*

Jesus Christ is the messenger of God, to publish his dispensation of mercy to mankind; and to fulfill his commission, he offered up his life. He is the mercy seat, on which the cloud of glory rests; sprinkled and consecrated by his own blood, as that of old was by the blood of the appointed victim.

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<sup>1</sup> *With respect to.*] “*Δια τῆς παρθεσύνης*, in relation to the passing over, &c. *Δια*, with an accusative, frequently signifies with respect or in relation to. See chap. viii. 10, note.” Taylor. See also Newcome and Raphelius *in loc.* John xi. 15, 42, xii. 9, 30; Rom. ii. 24, iv. 23, vi. 19, viii. 11.

On this sacred basis divine mercy takes its stand, and proclaims the commencement of a new and glorious æra. It announces a dispensation of grace, in which all, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be received into favour, notwithstanding all past transgressions; and which particularly illustrates the reason of the divine forbearance, in not executing judgement upon past transgressions, since a dispensation of mercy was in the divine contemplation which should efface them all, and restore to favour, peace, and hope, all who would submit to its reasonable terms.

Ch. III.  
Ver. 25.

*For the declaration of his method of justification at this present time, that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*

26.

Divine mercy having thus appointed Jesus to be the medium of the new dispensation, has thought fit to make it known to the world in the present age, the age in which it is our happiness to live, and which infinite wisdom has selected as the fittest and the best for the introduction of this new and benevolent scheme. And as faith in Jesus is the easy, the reasonable, and the sole condition of admission to the privileges of the new covenant, these blessings are equally open to all, whether Jew or Gentile. And thus hath God approved himself the kind parent and the equitable and impartial ruler of all his reasonable creatures. He is just to all, while he thus justifies all who believe without any exception.

This appears to me to be the true interpretation

Ch. III.  
Ver. 26.

of this difficult and much mistaken passage; and thus understood, it affords no foundation for the commonly received doctrine of the Atonement, upon which many lay so improper a stress, and of which this passage is considered as one of the chief supports. But, in order to extract any appearance of argument in favour of this unscriptural doctrine, it is necessary—First, To interpret the word *REDEMPTION*, which often expresses deliverance without purchase, as necessarily including a ransom paid. Secondly, To annex the sense of *propitiation* to a word, which in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament uniformly signifies a *propitiatory* or mercy seat. Thirdly, To receive as the genuine text a reading which is wanting in some of the best copies, and which is unwarranted by any similar phraseology in the New Testament, viz. faith in the blood of Christ. And finally, To interpret the expression, that “God may be just,” as alluding to a satisfaction made to justice by the atonement of Christ, when there is no proof that such satisfaction was ever required, or such atonement ever made; and when the words admit of a sense more obvious, and much better suited to the connexion and to the train of the apostle’s argument.

In this way, by false readings and erroneous interpretations, the grossest corruptions of the Christian doctrine are often obtruded upon the world, as the genuine doctrines of the New Testament and the dictates of inspiration.

2. 'This method of justification excludes boasting; it vindicates the impartiality of God, and lays the best foundation for the practice of virtue, ver. 27—31. Ch. III.

*Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what law? by the law of works? No: but by the law of faith. For we are come<sup>1</sup> to the conclusion that a man is justified by faith independently of any works of law.* Ver. 27. 28.

What now becomes of the boasting of the privileged Jew? of his fancied superiority to the uncovenanted Gentile? It is all at an end. He must be content to rank upon a level with his heathen neighbour. And by what authority is he reduced to this state of equality? does the law of Moses place him there? No, truly. Had this law been kept, he would have had a just claim to pre-eminence; but this privilege he has forfeited by transgression, and faith is now the appointed and only mode of access to the blessings of the new covenant. And this way is open equally to Jew and Gentile. For, after a fair appeal to experience and to scripture, we have been compelled to this conclusion, that the possession of the privileges of the gospel is to be obtained by faith, and not by any antecedent merit in obeying either the natural or the ceremonial law.

Is *God* the God of the Jews only? Is he not 29.

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<sup>1</sup> For we are come.] “*γαρ*,” Griesbach. The received text reads “therefore,” *οὖν*.

Ch. III. *also the God of the Gentiles? Surely of the Gen-*  
 Ver. 30. *tiles also: For it is the same God who justifieth*  
*the circumcised who have faith<sup>1</sup>, and the uncir-*  
*cumcised through the same faith.*

All this is perfectly agreeable to the impartial goodness of God. The Jew glories, and justly glories, in God as his God: it is a thought which inspires his heart with joy and triumph. But is the favour of God confined to the Hebrew nation only? Is he not the Maker, the Preserver, the Benefactor, the Friend and Father of all his reasonable creatures? of the heathen as well as the Jew? Surely God is the great universal Parent, and is equally kind to all his rational offspring. Well then does it become his impartial and unbounded goodness to extend the blessings of the gospel to the heathen upon the same easy terms upon which they are granted to the Jew. All are justified by faith.

Nothing can be more reasonable than the doctrine thus laid down by the apostle; and yet nothing could be more offensive to the conceited, narrow-spirited Jew, who was desirous of engross-

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<sup>1</sup> *The circumcised who have faith.*] περιτομην εκ πισεως, the circumcision; i. e. the Jews who believe, and who expect justification by faith. There is no reason to suppose, as most expositors do, any antithesis or correlation between εκ πισεως and δια της πισεως. So Gal. iii. 7, 9, οι εκ πισεως, "they who believe, who are of the party of faith, are justified with believing Abraham." In opposition to οι εξ εργαων νομου, they who are of the party of the law, who expect justification by works of law. Gal. iii. 2, 5, 10.

ing the favour of God to himself, and who could not endure the thought of being depressed to a level with the heathen, whom he despised and abhorred. The apostle Paul himself was once as illiberal as the most rigid Pharisee; and the catholic, generous spirit which he now discovers was not the result of his own mature reflection, but the act of divine mercy, which transformed him at once from a savage persecutor to a humble, penitent believer, and which selected and qualified him to preach the gospel to the Gentile world. And this extraordinary change produced in the views and temper of the apostle, is a very strong presumption in favour of the divine authority under which he acted and taught.

He concludes this argument by entering a caution against the abuse of the doctrine which he had laid down of justification by faith without works.

*Do we then destroy law through faith? Far from it: yea, we establish law.*

Can it be supposed that when I state that the only way of admission into the new covenant, and to the privileges of the gospel, is through faith in Jesus as the Messiah, without any respect to antecedent merit in obeying the natural or the ceremonial law, that I thereby mean to release believers in Christ from all regard to the law of God, and to confound the distinction between right and wrong? Nothing could be further from my thoughts than such a doctrine as this; and I shall soon take an opportunity to show not only that a belief in the gospel is perfectly reconcileable with obedience, but

Ch. III.  
Ver. 30.

31.

Ch. III. that the motives of the gospel are of the highest  
Ver. 31. efficacy to purify the hearts and lives of the converted Gentiles ; and that with regard to the Jew, they are beyond comparison more operative than the precepts and the sanctions of the law.

The apostle resumes this important subject in the sixth and seventh chapters ; and in the mean time he proceeds to allege some additional arguments to establish his favourite principle, that under the dispensation of the gospel all men are equally regarded as the children of God ; and that the descendant of Abraham has no privilege above the rest of mankind.

## SECTION II.

Ch. IV. *The apostle argues, that the privileges of the gospel are the free unmerited gift of God to all mankind without distinction, from the case of Abraham, the pattern of believers ; to whom promises were made for the faith which he exercised antecedently to the rite of circumcision*<sup>1</sup>. Ch. iv.

1. The apostle proposes the question, and suggests the test by which it might be determined in what way Abraham was justified, ver. 1, 2.

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<sup>1</sup> The argument from the example of Abraham, pursued throughout this chapter, is so exactly similar to that which is proposed in the Epistle to the Galatians, chap. iii., that it is hardly possible that they should not have been dictated by the same person. And it is surprising, that Mr. Evanson, who acknowledges the genuineness of the Epistle to the Galatians, did not see how irresistibly this internal evidence supports the authenticity of the Epistle to the Romans.



*What then shall we say? that Abraham our father obtained justification through the flesh? Now, if Abraham was justified by works, he hath somewhat in which he may glory.*

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 1.

2.

As though the apostle had said, I have established at large, both from history and scripture, that the blessings of the gospel are the free gift of God both to Jew and Gentile, and not the reward of antecedent merit. And, to reconcile us the more to this humiliating doctrine, I am now about to

\* *What then shall we say?* Others translate the sentence thus, *What advantage then shall we say, that Abraham our father found us to the flesh?* See Newcome. The meaning is much the same; but the version in the text is more in the apostle's lively manner. See chap. iii. 5, 9; chap. vi. 1, 15.—The apostle states the objection of the Jew, that Abraham was justified by circumcision, κατὰ σαρκα, according to the flesh, and therefore by works. But he was our *Father*, that is, our pattern; therefore the Jews are justified or brought into a covenant state by circumcision. No, says the apostle Abraham was not justified by circumcision, but by the faith which he had before he was circumcised; and circumcision was only the sign or seal of his antecedent justification.

† *Through the flesh.* κατὰ σαρκα. Dr. Taylor has very ably proved, in his note upon this passage, that this phrase has respect to circumcision, and the obligations it laid on the Jew. See Gal. vi. 12; 1 Cor. x. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 18; Phil. iii. 3. That learned and judicious expositor very properly states, that after the apostle has introduced his argument, ver. 1, 2, he shows that according to the scripture account Abraham was justified by faith, ver. 3, 4, 5; explains the nature of that justification by a quotation out of the Psalms, ver. 6--9; proves that Abraham was justified long before he was circumcised, ver. 9, 10, 11; that the believing Gentiles are his seed, to whom the promise belongs, as well as the believing Jews, ver. 12--17; describes Abraham's faith, in order to explain the faith of the gospel, ver. 17 to the end.

‡ *He may glory.* See ch. iii. 27. "he may ascribe his justification to something in himself." Taylor.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 2. remind you that Abraham himself, our honoured ancestor, our revered pattern, became entitled to the privileges of the covenant in the same way. Are you startled at this supposition? What! do any of you imagine that our venerable ancestor obtained his privileges by a claim of right, on the footing of prior complete obedience to positive law? If this be your judgement, we will soon bring the case to a decisive test; for if he is authorized to put in a claim of right, he has good reason to think well of himself on this account.

That this is the true sense of the apostle can be doubted by none who are at all acquainted with his abrupt and elliptical style. He does not speak of Abraham as our *father* according to the flesh, but as having *found* according to the flesh. But that which he found was justification, the blessings of the promise, and the covenant. And to find it according to the flesh is to find it by works of law, and particularly by the rite of circumcision; for this is the sense in which the word *flesh* occurs repeatedly, both in this epistle and in that to the Galatians; and the latter clause fully explains the meaning of the former, the expression “being justified by works” being used by the apostle as equivalent to that of “having found according to the flesh.”

2. The apostle shows, from the scripture history, that Abraham’s justification was the consequence of faith, not the reward of works, ver. 2—5.

—*But he had it not in the presence of God*<sup>1</sup>.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 2.

This eminent patriarch neither possessed, nor made any pretension, in the presence of God, to a claim of right, on the ground of past obedience, to a further extension of privilege.

*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was placed to his account*<sup>2</sup> *for justification.* Gen. xv. 6.

3.

The history plainly tells us, that the patriarch was received into favour, not for any work that he had antecedently performed, but because he believed in the divine promise that he should have a numerous posterity by his wife Sarah.

*Now to him who performeth a task, the recompense is placed to account not as a favour, but as a debt*<sup>3</sup>. *But to him who doth not perform a task, but who believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly*<sup>4</sup>, *his faith is placed to account for justification.*

4.

5.

<sup>1</sup> *In the presence of God.*] “The apostle considers Abraham as standing in the court, before God’s tribunal, when the promise was given him.” Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *Placed to his account.*] *λογιστήν*: the expression refers to a book of accounts in which a sum is placed on the credit side. “*Proprie tribuitur arithmeticis qui multas summas in unam colligunt et reducant.*” Schleusner. In our translation it is rendered *counted*, ver. 3, 5; *reckoned*, ver. 4, 9, 10; *imputed*, ver. 6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24. The sense in all these passages is the same. See Taylor. The term *imputed* has been so much misunderstood, that I have preferred to use the word *reckon* or *place* to account.

<sup>3</sup> *To him who, &c.*] “Now the pay of the workman is not reckoned a favour, but a debt.” Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *Who justifieth the ungodly.*] “This,” says Archbishop Newcome, “may be considered as a general character of God,

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 5.

The man who performs a service for hire has a right to his wages, and is under no special obligation to the man who pays him his just due. But this was not the case with Abraham: he had done no work, he could claim no remuneration. He was a poor ungodly heathen, when God summoned him out of his country and promised him a posterity as numerous as the sand upon the shore. All his merit consisted in believing that God would fulfill his promise; and with this faith the Almighty was so well pleased that he entered into covenant with him to bestow still better blessings.

3. This happy state of Abraham is well described in the language which David uses upon a different subject, ver. 6—8.

6. *As David also describes<sup>1</sup> the blessedness of the man to whom God reckoneth justification without*
7. *works. Blessed are they whose iniquities are for-*
8. *given, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.*

Abraham must have felt himself unspeakably happy in being thus selected, though unworthy, as a person upon whom the Divine Being thought fit to bestow peculiar favour; just as the psalmist de-

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and may refer to the whole heathen world as well as to Abraham;” ch. v. 6.—Mr. Locke observes that “the apostle by these words plainly pointed out Abraham.”

<sup>1</sup> *David describes.*] This is an illustration, not an argument. The apostle can only mean that the words of David aptly describe the case of Abraham.

scribes the case of a great transgressor, who, conscious of sincere repentance, humbly hopes in the divine mercy that his sin shall be forgiven, and is filled with joy and gratitude under a sense of his unspeakable obligation.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 8.

4. The apostle plainly shows, from the example of Abraham, that the blessings of the covenant were to extend to all believers without distinction, ver. 9—12.

And first he states the question, ver. 9.

*Now this blessedness, cometh it upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also?*

9.

Is this happy state, which I have been describing, limited to the natural descendants of Abraham alone, or is it extended equally to the believing heathen? As to the patriarch himself, the mode in which he obtained this favour has been already ascertained.

*For we affirm that this faith was reckoned to Abraham for justification.*

—9.

We have proved, by the express words of scripture, that the privileges of this patriarch were the reward not of works, but of faith; and, that you may not imagine that the faith so rewarded was that of one who was already in a covenant state, and the consequence of circumcision, I will now show the contrary.

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\* *Circumcised—uncircumcised.*] Gr. “circumcision or uncircumcision.” The apostle perpetually uses the abstract for the concrete.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 10.

- How then was it reckoned to him? Was it after or before circumcision? Not after circumcision, but before it. And he received the sign of circumcision, as the seal of that justification by faith which he possessed before circumcision.*

The case of Abraham is clear: he believed and was justified before the birth of Ishmael, many years before circumcision was instituted, Gen. xvii.; and that rite was appointed, not as a means of justification, but as a token that he was already in a justified state, which he had been, and was declared to be long before.

The apostle now proceeds to argue, that as Abraham was justified by faith, and that, when he was in a heathen state, and as he is expressly marked out as the pattern of all who are admitted into a state of privilege, it necessarily follows, that all who believe are to be admitted into this happy state without distinction of Jew or heathen, and whether they do or do not submit to the yoke of the law; for he was admitted antecedently to circumcision for this very purpose.

12. *That he might be the father<sup>1</sup> of all uncircumcised believers<sup>2</sup>, that justification might be placed even to their account: and the father of those who are circumcised, who are not only circumcised, but who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had before circumcision.*

<sup>1</sup> *The father.*] See Dr. Taylor's note on Rom. iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Uncircumcised believers.*] δι' ἀκροβυστίας, in a state of uncircumcision. See Rom. ii. 27, 1 Cor. xiv. 9.

To be the father of any person, or class of persons, often signifies, in the Hebrew idiom, to be an inventor, or a pattern, of any art or quality which such persons possess, or in which they excell. Thus, Gen. iv. 21, Jubal is said to have been the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ, that is, he was the inventor of those instruments and a pattern to those who use them. In this sense Abraham was set forth and declared to be the father or pattern of all believers: of heathen believers, because he was justified before he was circumcised; and of Jews, because he received the initiatory rite not as the means of justification, but as an acknowledgement that he was already justified; and consequently as a pattern to them, not of justification by the ritual law, but by a faith similar to that by which their illustrious ancestor was himself justified.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 12.

5. Justification cannot be appointed through law, for that would be a violation of promise and an assignment to condemnation, ver. 13—15.

*Moreover, the promise that he should be heir of the world<sup>3</sup> was not made to Abraham or to his*

13.

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<sup>3</sup> *Heir of the world.*] Dr. Taylor supposes that the apostle means to represent the world as one great family. Abraham and his posterity are the heirs of the world, i.e. the first-born of this family, and therefore entitled to the better portion of the inheritance. This is ingenious; but though it is adopted by Archbishop Newcome, it appears to me to be too refined. The sense given in the paraphrase of this difficult passage, which is similar to that given by Mr. Locke, seems to me to be more natural, and more agreeable to the apostle's manner and phraseology.

“ The

Ch. IV. *posterity through law, but through justification by*  
 Ver. 13. *faith.*

The promise made by God to Abraham also proves the doctrine of justification by faith. That promise was (Gen., xvii.) that he should be the father of many nations, that God would give to him and to his posterity the land of Canaan, and that in him should all nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. This may be regarded as a promise that he should be heir of the world; first, that his natural descendants should possess the land of Canaan and many other countries; and secondly, that his spiritual descendants should include men of all ages and countries, whether naturally descended from him or not; but that all, in all parts of the world, who inherit his faith, should be acknowledged to be of his family, and should participate in the promise. Now it is plain from the history, that this promise to the patriarch was made to him as the reward of his faith in the divine call which induced him to quit his native land, and not as the consequence of obedience to any law, much less of conformity to the rite of circumcision, which was instituted after the promise was given, and as a token of its ratification, Gen. xvii. 10.

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“The promise here meant,” says Mr. Locke, “is that which he speaks of ver. 11, whereby Abraham was made the father of all that should believe, all the world over, and for that reason he is called *κληρονόμος κόσμου*, heir or lord of the world. For, believers of all the nations of the world being given to him for a posterity, he becomes thereby lord and possessor (for so heir among the Hebrews signified) of the world.”



*For if they only who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is abrogated.* Ch. IV.  
Ver. 14.

Upon the supposition that law only secured the blessing, only one nation would be heir, and that upon a different ground from Abraham himself; so that the promise would be made void in both its parts, first by the exclusion of the Gentiles, and secondly by changing the ground of justification. Abraham would not be the pattern of many nations, but of one only; nor even of that completely, for *they* would be justified through law, but *he* through faith.

*Moreover, law worketh wrath: for where there is no law, there is no transgression.* 15.

Nor is it indeed possible that any should obtain the blessing by law only. For, as all transgression supposes a rule transgressed, and there can be no transgression without it; so, as I have before abundantly shown, in the very case where a law has in fact been given, which if observed would have ensured justification, yet such has been the frailty and the folly of those who have lived under such a dispensation, that not a single individual has uniformly adhered to the law so as to claim justification by it, but every one by transgression has become obnoxious to its condemning sentence.

6. That justification, that is, the blessing of the gospel, should be granted to faith, was necessary to the accomplishment of the promise that it should

Ch. IV. be both gratuitous and universal, extending to all the heirs of Abraham's faith, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 16. *Therefore justification is from faith, that it might be through favour; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the posterity: not only to that which is of the law, but to that which is of the*  
 17. *faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, in the sight of that God in whom he believed, who giveth life to the dead, and who calleth things that are not, as though they were. As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations. See Gen. xvii. 4, 5.*

I again declare that the privileges of the gospel are granted and limited to faith alone. Why? Because the promise affirms that the blessing is both gratuitous and universal, which it could not be if it were limited to those only who are subject to the law of Moses, in which case the benefit would be confined to one nation alone; whereas, the promise of God to Abraham is, I have made thee a pattern of many nations without any distinction. In the sight of God, therefore, all who believe, in all ages and countries, are Abraham's children, and are to be justified after his pattern and in the same way. By the all-comprehending eye of God, which penetrates to the remotest period of duration, and discerns the future as distinctly as the present, the whole of this spiritual family of Abraham are seen as clearly as if they now existed; and therefore he speaks of the thing as actually done which it was

his determined purpose to accomplish, *I have made thee a father of many nations ; of all who believe to the end of time.* And the great object of Abraham's faith, and in which ours resembles that of the venerable patriarch, was the power of God to raise the dead, and to bring things out of nothing into existence.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 17.

7. The apostle illustrates the nature and the degree of Abraham's justifying faith, being tantamount to a belief in the power of God to create anew, and to raise the dead, ver. 18—22.

He first believed that his posterity by Sarah should be innumerable, ver. 18.

*Who against hope believed in hope, that he should be the father of many nations, according to that declaration, So shall thy posterity be.*

18.

It is related, Gen. xv. 5, that “ the Lord brought Abram forth abroad and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them ; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” Abraham was now a hundred years of age ; a similar promise had been made to him twenty-five years before, in the faith of which he had abandoned his native land and all his family connexions, and had fixed his residence in the land of Canaan among strangers, relying upon the divine promise that it should afterwards be granted to, and inhabited by, a numerous race of his descendants. This was hoping against hope, believing in contradiction to all appearances ; and, in effect, believing in the power

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 18.

of God to call those into being whose existence could not be accomplished by any human means, which indeed would be the same as a new creation.

The patriarch further believed that he should have a son by Sarah, which was equivalent to believing that God would raise the dead, ver. 19—21.

19. *And not being weak in faith, he considered not<sup>1</sup> his own body now become dead, when he was about a hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's*  
 20. *womb. Nor did he hesitate at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving*  
 21. *glory to God<sup>2</sup>, being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*

Considering the advanced age of Sarah and himself, it was as improbable that they should have a son as that a man should be raised from the dead; it was like a promise that they should themselves be so raised: and yet his faith in the divine promise was not staggered by this difficulty; he believed without hesitation. Being assured that Omnipotence itself had made the promise, he did not allow himself to reason concerning the difficulty of the performance. By the confidence which he reposed in the divine promise, he rendered to God the homage due to his infinite power, goodness and

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<sup>1</sup> *Considered not.*] Some good copies drop the *ε*. If this be the true reading, as Newcome observes, we must point thus: And not being weak in faith he considered his own body—and the deadness—and yet staggered not.

<sup>2</sup> *Giving glory.*] *δὰς δόξαν*, “giving up his opinion to God; resigning all supposition unto God, having no opinion on the subject, but leaving it all to God.” Wakefield.

truth, under a firm conviction that he was both able and willing to perform to the utmost all that he had promised. Ch. IV.  
Ver. 21.

The apostle adds, that this persevering active faith was crowned with its due reward, ver. 22.

*And therefore it was set to his account for justification.* 22.

God having made the promise, and Abraham having accepted it, and having relied wholly upon it, and sacrificed every thing to it, God was so well pleased with his conduct in this instance, that he graciously received him into favour, and communicated privileges and blessings to him, notwithstanding the transgressions of his heathen state, to as full an amount as though, by a course of sinless obedience, he had entitled himself to future favours. All past debts were graciously cancelled, and he was entered in the divine account as innocent and righteous.

8. The apostle closes this argument by stating, that the history of Abraham's justification was recorded for the instruction and encouragement of believers in Christ in succeeding ages who are justified in a similar way, ver. 23—25.

*Now it was not written for his sake only that faith was placed to his account, but for ours also*<sup>3</sup> 23.  
24.

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<sup>3</sup> For ours also.] "for the sake of us also, all in future ages, Gentiles as well as Jews, who may be admitted into the Christian covenant upon this sole condition, if they believe," &c. Newcome.

Ch. IV. *to whose account it will be placed, if we believe on*  
 Ver. 24. *him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.*

25. *Who was delivered up for our offences, and raised again for our justification.*

The account which is given in the book of Genesis concerning the strength and the reward of Abraham's faith, was not recorded merely for the sake of doing honour to the memory of that eminent patriarch, but for our benefit also, who live in the age in which the new dispensation is introduced. We may learn from this history, that the true posterity of Abraham, of whatever name or country, to whom the promise is made, will like him be justified by faith, and be admitted into the privileges of the new covenant without being compelled to submit to the yoke of the law ; and the object of our faith, like his, is the power of God to raise the dead. He believed in a possible resurrection, when he expected, according to the divine promise, a numerous posterity by Sarah. We believe in the actual resurrection of Jesus our teacher and master from the grave ; and this single act of faith is that which is set down to our account for justification : it is that which transfers us from the community of sinners to the community of saints, from the unbelieving into the Christian world.

And the fact is really as I have stated it ; for Jesus was indeed delivered up for our offences ; he was, figuratively speaking, offered up like a consecrated victim, by the sprinkling of whose blood we believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are transferred

from an unholy to a holy state ; and he was raised again, that by our faith in his resurrection, we might become partakers of the privileges of the covenant of which his blood was the seal, and might be as completely entitled to these privileges as if we had acquired a right to them by the most meritorious and undeviating obedience.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 25.

Such is the argument which the apostle draws from the case of Abraham to establish his grand principle, that believers, whether Jews or heathen, are to be admitted to the privileges of the gospel without submitting to the yoke of the ceremonial law. Upon this subject it may be proper to remark, that it was a fact well adapted to conciliate the Jews to the apostle's doctrine, that Abraham by his faith had obtained acceptance with God many years before he submitted to the rite of circumcision, and therefore that it was not incredible, that believing Gentiles should be admitted into the privileges of the gospel without submitting to the rites of the law.

The great article of the Christian faith is, that God raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. All who believe this important fact are justified in the sight of God, that is, they are received and acknowledged as members of the Christian community. Let none therefore of the disciples of Jesus narrow the terms of Christian communion, and, by unwarrantable conditions of their own, exclude those whom Christ has received.

Ch. IV.  
Ver. 25.

Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. The apostle probably meant nothing more than that Christ was delivered up to death, and was raised again that we might be justified from our offences; that we who were heathen transgressors might by faith in his resurrection be introduced into a state of covenant privilege. At any rate, the few ambiguous words which the apostle here uses, will not support the commonly received doctrine of atonement for sin by the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ. The free unpurchased love of God is the foundation of all the privileges and hopes of the true Christian.

### SECTION III.

Ch. V. *The apostle, having proved that the gospel is a free gift both to Jews and Gentiles, illustrates the value of its blessings.* Ch. v. 1—11.

First, the justified believer obtains peace with God, and admission into his presence and favour, ver. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *Therefore being justified by faith we have peace*  
2. *with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have access, by faith<sup>1</sup>, into this grace in which we stand.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Access by faith.*] The words “by faith” are omitted in the Clermont and other MSS., and are indeed superfluous. Προσ-αγγιγη, access. Raphaelius, from Hierodotus, shows that this, a sacerdotal phrase, signifies being introduced with great solemnity into the presence of a deity in his temple. See Doddridge.



It was the boast of the conceited Jew that he was holy, while the rest of mankind were sinners; that he was in a state of friendship and peace with God, while others were aliens and enemies; that he was the favourite of heaven, while they were under a curse; and the apostle's design in this eloquent passage is to show that believers in Christ possess all the privileges of God's ancient people, though they do not submit to the Jewish ceremonial.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 2.

*Being justified by faith we have peace with God.*

Being, by our belief in the doctrine and resurrection of Jesus Christ, transferred like Abraham out of an unholy into a pardoned and a holy state, without submitting to the rites of the law, we are like that eminent patriarch become friends of God, through the medium of our master Jesus Christ, who was commissioned to offer and to ratify the terms of pacification; and by faith in him, we have been introduced by him into that state of privilege and favour which we now occupy, and in which the descendants of Abraham made their boast.

Secondly, The justified believer has now also his ground of boasting, ver. —2—11.

1. In his hope, ver. —2.

*—and boast in hope of the glory of God<sup>2</sup>.*

—2.

The Jew boasts in his written law, in his descent from Abraham, in his ceremonial institute, in his

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<sup>2</sup> *Glory of God.*] “of the glory which God has in store for us.” Locke. “in hope of future glory.” Priestley.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 2. temporal promises. The believer in Christ also has his ground of exultation : he boasts not of an earthly Canaan, a transitory and fading possession, but of a divine inheritance, of the glorious hope to which he is elevated by the gospel. A possession worthy of God to bestow ; to the discovery of which the philosophy of heathenism could make no pretensions ; and from the hope of which the severe sentence of the law excludes all voluntary transgressors.

2. Believers also boast even in affliction, for various reasons which the apostle details, ver. 3—10.

For in the first place affliction produces patience, proof and well founded hope.

3. *And not only so, but we boast even in afflictions ; for affliction worketh patience, and patience proof<sup>1</sup>, and proof hope.*

Many regard the followers of Christ with contempt and scorn ; they value themselves upon their affluence, their dignity, their external prosperity, their popularity and influence. We also boast who believe in Christ : we esteem it our honour to be despised, to be oppressed, to be the objects of general reproach and scorn.

For patience, exercised by persecution, is continually improving, and the fortitude with which we

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<sup>1</sup> *Proof*.] See Wakefield, Taylor, Locke. “ *Δοκιμαζ, id quod, experientia facta, patrescit et cognoscitur.*” Schleusner. 2 Cor. ii. 9, ix. 12 ; Phil. ii. 22. “ The effect of having tried ourselves.” Newcome.

suffer is a sure test of the sincerity of our profession; and the clearer proof we have of the conformity of our character to the standard of the gospel, the brighter will be our hope of an interest in all its glorious promises.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 4.

*And this hope will not put us to shame, because the love of God<sup>2</sup> is poured forth into our hearts by the holy spirit given to us.*

5.

The gifts of the holy spirit, by which the Christian doctrine is confirmed, are a demonstration that all the promises of the gospel covenant shall be fulfilled, being an undoubted proof of the favour of God to those who believe in Christ, and the seal and ratification of that Being who cannot falsify himself.

These promises are further confirmed by the mission of his son to die even for those who were aliens and enemies, ver. 6—8.

*Moreover while we were yet without strength<sup>3</sup>, even then<sup>4</sup>, at the appointed time, Christ died for the ungodly<sup>5</sup>. For scarcely for a righteous man*

6.

7.

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<sup>2</sup> *The love of God,*] i. e. to us, not our love to him. "The love of God is abundantly assured to our hearts by the gifts and operations of the holy spirit." Taylor. See also Locke.

<sup>3</sup> *Without strength.*] Mr. Locke notes four, and Dr. Taylor fourteen epithets, which are given by St. Paul to unconverted Gentiles, as such; and Dr. Taylor adds an equal number of epithets which express the external state of Christians.

<sup>4</sup> *Even then.*] *Ετι*: This is the reading adopted by Griesbach, upon the authority of the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and other manuscripts. "though we were weak, still Christ died in due season," &c. Newcome.

<sup>5</sup> *Died for the ungodly.*] *ὑπερ τῶν ἀσεβῶν*. Dr. Taylor very justly observes, "that in the following comparison the apostle

Ch. V. *will one die; yet perhaps for a good man some*  
 Ver. 8. *would even dare to die. But God recommendeth*  
*his love to us, in that, while we were still sinners,*  
*Christ died for us.*

The apostle, in speaking of the converted heathen, to whom chiefly the epistle is addressed, uses the same reproachful language in which the pharisaic Jews were accustomed to speak of their heathen neighbours. In their unconverted state they had been "without strength," unable to extricate themselves from their wretched condition; "ungodly," worshipers of idols, ignorant of the true God, of his attributes, of his character, of his will, and of his worship; "sinners," alienated from him, in an unholy uncovenanted state: yet even then, at the appointed time, Christ died for them.

But though it is plain that the apostle's language is intended to express their character and state as heathen, previous to their conversion, to avoid offence he uses the first person, as though he had himself been implicated in the charge; whereas, before his conversion he had been a Jew, and, as

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does not lead our thoughts to the payment of an equivalent, or to the notion of vicarious punishment, but to that benevolent disposition of mind which inclines us to do good and to be useful to others, even at our own expense and hazard. So John xv. 13: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life (*ὑπερ ἐκλῶν*) for his friends.' See John x. 11, 12; 1 John iii. 16." Nor does the preposition *ὑπερ* necessarily imply an equivalent, or vicarious punishment. See Acts v. 41, ix. 16, xv. 26; 2 Cor. xii. 15. As Christ suffered for us, we also are said to suffer for him, *ὑπερ αὐτῶν*, Phil. i. 29, surely not as a sacrifice in his stead.

touching the righteousness which is by the law, blameless.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 8.

*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* From this general and indefinite expression some have strangely inferred, that the sufferings of Christ were properly speaking vicarious; that he suffered in the stead of others; that he endured all the torments which the elect would have endured to all eternity: that he thus became the sinner's surety, and paid the dreadful debt due to divine justice. But it is plain that the apostle's language lays no just foundation for a doctrine so absurd in itself, and so injurious to the divine character. He only says, that Christ died for us: that is, for our benefit. The connexion shows that the apostle's meaning is, that Christ died to deliver us from the condemning sentence of the law, by ratifying the new covenant, which is a dispensation of mercy.

Christ died at "the appointed season," at the time which had been marked out by prophecy, and which had been chosen by infinite wisdom as the fittest and best.

The death of Christ was an appointment of God, the result of his love. He pitied the wretched state of the heathen world, their ignorance of God, of duty, and of a future life, their inability to help themselves, and their deplorable idolatry and vice; and he determined to rescue them from their ignorance and guilt and misery, by sending Jesus Christ, his beloved son, his chosen servant, not only to teach them, but to die for them.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 8.

And thus the love of God became eminently conspicuous. Had mankind been sinless, the love of God in giving up his son to die for them would not have been so highly distinguished. Men do not indeed usually expose their lives for the benefit of others, however just and unblameable. Although it is possible, that here and there, a generous spirit might be willing to die in order to save the life of some distinguished philanthropist, some illustrious benefactor of mankind. But where could any one be found who would submit to death for the benefit of rebels and enemies? Such, however, was the exceeding greatness of the love of God to man. Christ was sent to die, not for the innocent, not for those who had merited favour by antecedent virtue: No; he died for sinners, for enemies, for those who had forfeited their lives by their transgressions, and who could prefer no claim to mercy.

The apostle infers, from this extraordinary instance of divine goodness, that all other blessings shall be communicated, ver. 9, 10.

9. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*
10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> *By his life.*] “we shall obtain eternal salvation by that life and power to which our Lord and Saviour is exalted.” Taylor. “living to intercede for us.” Newcome. I rather conceive the apostle’s meaning to be, not that we are saved by the life of Christ as the medium of salvation, but that this salvation

This is a remarkable passage, and when rightly understood will greatly assist in explaining the sense of the apostolic writings. Ch. v.  
Ver. 10.

They who believe in Christ are "justified by his blood." But something further is necessary in order to their being "saved from wrath." They are already "reconciled to God by the death of his son;" but something more is to be done to complete their salvation. It follows, therefore, that men may be justified and reconciled; and yet, after all, they may not be saved from wrath, nor be entitled to the promised reward.

What then can be more evident than that the justification and reconciliation here mentioned mean nothing more than their admission into the Christian community, and their participation of the blessings of the gospel? From being sinners, that is, Gentiles, they are become holy; that is, separated by faith from the unbelieving world; and

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is accomplished, leaving Christ in possession of life: *q. d.* reconciliation was obtained for enemies, though the death of Christ was the necessary medium, much more will salvation be obtained for friends when no such sacrifice is requisite; but all that is to be done will be done by Christ in the continued possession of life. Mr. Locke has a long and valuable note to show that the apostle, in the first eleven chapters of the epistle, speaks of the Jews and Gentiles nationally, and not personally of single men: but I do not see the necessity of limiting the apostle's observations in the first eleven verses of this chapter to Gentile believers only: they are equally applicable to all Christians, in all ages. It seems to be a burst of feeling to which the apostle gives vent, upon the comparison of the present free and happy state of believers under the gospel, with the previous miserable condition of the Jew under the law, or the Gentile in his wretched bondage to idolatry and vice.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 10.

from being enemies, they are become reconciled, they are received as subjects of the kingdom of Christ. This happy change is effected by the death of Christ, which ratified that new and better covenant which is the connecting bond of this new community. If they improve their privileges, they shall be saved from wrath through him. For Christ has laid down laws and regulations which, if his professed followers adhere to and faithfully observe, shall save them from final condemnation, and put them into possession of eternal life. The apostle argues, *a fortiori*, upon this subject: You were admitted to justification and to the privileges of the gospel by a process which cost the life of the beloved Son of God. Is it not then far more credible, that if you obey the gospel of Christ you shall be finally saved by him; when you are not only regarded as friends and heirs of a promise, but when the accomplishment of this promise will be achieved at much less expense than the acquisition of your present privileges? For it will not be necessary for Christ again to suffer, but the whole scheme will be brought to perfection by the exercise of those powers with which he is invested in his risen and exalted state<sup>1</sup>.

Well then may the believer triumph in those

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<sup>1</sup> “ Much more, therefore, having been admitted into covenant at this time, while we were sinners, by his blood shed to ratify this covenant and to purchase a church, we shall be finally saved through him from punishment, if we live in a manner worthy our calling.” Newcome.



afflictions and persecutions, which by purifying and exalting his character clear up his title to those everlasting blessings which are promised by the gospel to all who believe in it and regulate their conduct by it.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 10.

3. Believers also boast in God, with whom a reconciliation has now taken place through Jesus Christ, ver. 11.

*And not only so, but we even boast in God<sup>2</sup> through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.*

11.

Not only do we, who are believers in Christ and admitted into the community over which he presides, boast in hope of future glory; not only do we boast in those tribulations and persecutions which, by exercising our faith, eventually brighten our hope; but we even boast in God as our own. Yes; such is the abundant mercy of God, that even we, who were once idolatrous heathen, aliens, and enemies, are now permitted to look up to God as reconciled, and to call him our God in the same important sense in which he was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And this privilege we claim through Jesus Christ, who has received and acknowledged us as his disciples and

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<sup>2</sup> *We even boast in God.*] Compare Rom. ix. 5. The proposed emendation of Slichtingius, Whitby, and Taylor, is very much countenanced by this passage.—*We boast*: καυχώμενοι, the present participle for the present indicative: a Hebrew idiom. See Newcome.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 11.

friends ; and through whom we have received that gracious message of reconciliation, to the terms of which we have gladly acceded, and which lies at the foundation of all our hope. We are now, as the chosen family once were, the people and the children of God.

Such is the plain meaning of the apostle's language to those who read the scriptures with an unbiassed mind. The words, as they stand in the public version, have a very uncouth sound, " by whom we have received the atonement ;" but the translation is strictly just. The word atonement, at the time when this version was made, signified nothing more than reconciliation, or setting those *at one* who were before at *variance*. But of late years, this word has acquired a mystical sense ; and has been used to express an action or suffering, by one person or victim, through which the anger of another person is appeased. And in this sense we are told that the death of Christ is an atonement for the sins of men : that is, that it appeases the wrath of God, and satisfies the claims of justice. But no such doctrine as this, nor any thing approaching to it, is to be found in the New Testament.

Here the apostle closes his eloquent digression concerning the great privileges of which believers gain possession when they are received into the Christian community ; and he next proceeds to suggest an additional argument to establish the reasonableness of admitting all mankind to equal privileges and hopes.

## SECTION IV.

*The apostle argues, that as the Fall entails death upon all mankind without any antecedent demerit of their own; so the gospel, ratified by the voluntary sacrifice of Christ, entails far better blessings upon mankind than were lost by Adam; and this, without any antecedent merit on their part, ver. 12 to the end.* Ch. V.

1. He states that all mankind are treated as sinners, and suffer death, in consequence of the sin of Adam, ver. 12.

*In reference to this subject<sup>1</sup>, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, even so death passed upon all men, as far as which<sup>2</sup> all have sinned.* Ver. 12.

The apostle here assumes and reasons upon the account of the Fall contained in the book of Ge-

<sup>1</sup> Δια τούτο, Wherefore. "So then," Wakefield. This phrase, says Dr. Taylor, frequently signifies "in relation to the affair going before:" not by way of inference from it, but to denote a further enlargement upon it, or the advancement of something which enforces or explains it. He refers to Matt. vi. 25, xii. 31; Rom. xiii. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 17; and many other passages. "Concerning this matter." Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> Ὡς ὧς, as far as which. See Dr. Taylor on Orig. Sin, part i. p. 51—55. "inasmuch as," Newcome. "all have sinned; i. e. all have become mortal," Locke. "Ἐπὶ cum dativo constructa denotat quod attinet ad. Act. v. 35; Xenoph. Anab. vi. 6, 13." Schleusner. q. d. so far as relates to which, all are sinners; i. e. treated as sinners. Gal. v. 13; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 14.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 12.

nesis, as an historical fact ; and he traces an analogy between the consequences of the fall of Adam and those of the righteousness of Christ. And as the apostle was instructed by Christ himself in the nature and the excellence of the gospel dispensation, in all its comprehension and extent, we are fully authorized to admit his conclusions even though we may doubt of the validity of his arguments, and the correctness of his premises. The apostle does not say that he was inspired to assert the literal truth of the Mosaic history of the Fall : probably, he knew no more of it than we do. Perhaps he only argued *ex concessio*, upon the supposition of the fact ; and certainly no reasonable person in modern times can regard it in any other light than as an allegory or fable, the moral of which is sufficiently apparent. But the apostle assumes its historic truth ; and, admitting the Mosaic account to be a fact, he argues that the curses entailed by Adam's fall, and the blessings secured by the death of Christ, are equally independent of the antecedent merit or demerit of those who are the subjects of them ; also, that the curse and the blessing are equally universal, but that the blessings of the gospel extend far beyond the miseries of the Fall.

It is as though he had said, the mercy of God in the gospel of Christ may be illustrated by referring to the narrative of the Fall. The first sin was the transgression of Adam ; and by the law under which he was placed, this transgression was punished with death. And death was for this offence

entailed upon all his posterity; who are so far regarded as sinning in him, that they are for his transgression condemned to suffer death, without any transgression of their own.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 12.

2. The apostle justifies his assertion, and alleges that Christ, as a public person, resembles Adam, ver. 13, 14.

*For antecedently<sup>1</sup> to the law sin was in the world; but sin is not charged where law is not in being. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned<sup>2</sup>, after the likeness of Adam's transgression: who is a type of him who was to come<sup>3</sup>.*

You may perhaps object, that mankind died as a punishment for their own transgressions, and not for that of Adam: but that was not the case, as it stands in the record. It is true that men were sinners, from the time of Adam to the time of Moses; but they did not, like their first ancestor, sin against a law expressly denouncing death. And it would have been unjust to inflict a penalty which

<sup>1</sup> *Antecedently.*] Ἀρχῇ, until. "sin was in the world all the time before the law." Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Who had not sinned, &c.*] "even over infants, as well as others." Doddridge. But the apostle is speaking of all mankind, who suffered death, though not under a law whose penalty was death.

<sup>3</sup> *A type, &c.*] A figure or model, Acts vii. 44; Rom. vi. 17; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7, of him who was to come, τὸ μέλλοντος; i. e. Adam; Christ, the second Adam. Sir Norton Knatchbull and Dr. Milner explain it, of all mankind who were to come; i. e. Adam was the type of all his posterity, who suffer as he suffered.

Ch. V. had never been promulgated. Men did not die,  
Ver. 14. therefore, for their own sins. And yet it is plain,  
that during this interval men were universally subject to the dominion of death, even though they had not, like Adam, offended against a law of which death was the penalty; no such law having been in existence, from the time of Adam to the declaration from mount Sinai. Thus it appears, that all who died antecedently to the law of Moses, died not for their own sins, but for the sin of Adam; and such, by parity of reason, is the case of all mankind.

Such is the train of the apostle's reasoning, the defect of which need not be pointed out.

He adds concerning Adam, that he is the type of him who was to come; that is, of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the prophet who was expected to come into the world. A strong resemblance may be traced between Adam and Christ: they were both public persons, whose character and conduct entailed very important consequences upon the whole human race.

3. There is nevertheless a great disparity, both in the acts of these public persons and in the consequences of these acts, ver. 15—17.

The apostle's meaning is sufficiently obvious, but his style is obscure; for, instead of contrasting the points of comparison, fact with fact, and consequence with consequence, he contrasts the fact in one case with the consequence in the other; thus introducing a confusion of ideas which makes it

difficult to unravel the sense. What he means to state and prove is, first, that Adam's act was an act of transgression, but that of Christ was an act of obedience; secondly, that calamities and death were the result of Adam's fall, but blessings, the free gift of God, were the result of Christ's obedience; and finally, that the blessings, which are the free gift of God in consequence of Christ's obedience, greatly outweigh the miseries accruing from the Fall.

The apostle first states the general fact, ver. 15.

*But not as was the offence, so also is the free gift. For if by the offence of that one man all<sup>1</sup> became mortal<sup>2</sup>, much more has the grace of God, and the gift by grace of that other man, Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>, abounded to all.*

Ch. V.  
Ver. 14.

16.

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<sup>1</sup> All.] “*οἱ πολλοί*.” So Wakefield, who in his usual laconic style remarks, “That *οἱ πολλοί* is equivalent to *πάντες* in these epistles, every one knows; and that this usage of the phrase is common to other authors. The doubtful may be referred to the introductory lines in Aristotle's rhetoric.”

<sup>2</sup> Became mortal.] “*ἀπέθανον*” literally died. “All mankind are made subject to death.” Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> The grace of God, and the gift by grace of that other man, Jesus Christ.] “*ἡ χάρις ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἰσθῆ Χριστοῦ*” literally, “and the gift by the favour or kindness of that other man,” &c. as though the gift were partly owing to the favour of God and partly to the favour of Christ. I cannot think this to be the apostle's meaning, who uniformly attributes the blessings of the gospel solely to the free unpurchased goodness of God: “the favour of Christ” in this connexion, therefore, is to be understood of that free gift of which Christ was the favoured medium, through whom it was communicated and dispensed to mankind: so that it is more properly a favour through Christ, than the favour or kindness of Christ. If, after all, the literal translation “the grace or favour of Christ” is preferred, the meaning may be, that the death of Christ, which ratified the new covenant, and for this reason is represented as the

Ch. V.  
Ver. 15.

If the apostle had expressed himself in the clear distinct manner of a correct writer, it would have been in some such language as this :

I have indeed asserted that Adam was a type or resemblance of Christ, as both were public persons, who by their acts entailed important consequences upon mankind. But here the similitude ends : nothing can be more opposite than the nature and effects of the conduct of Adam and of Christ. The act of Adam was an offence against the law of God ; that of Christ was an act of obedience. The transgression of Adam entailed death on all mankind, as the penalty of violated law. Not so the obedience of Christ : that entailed blessings in abundance. But mark the difference : the sentence of universal death was the legal punishment of Adam's sin, but the blessings resulting from the obedience of Christ are not such as can be claimed by law. Far from it : they are the free gift of God, unpurchased and perfectly optional ; and yet it will be found, as indeed might reasonably be expected from a God of infinite mercy, that these free unpurchased blessings, which are the reward of the second man's obedience, that is, of Jesus Christ, are far more beneficial to all mankind, than the consequences of the fall of the first man have been calamitous.

This is obviously the apostle's meaning ; but his anxiety to crowd his ideas into as few words as pos-

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source of evangelical blessings, was on his part a voluntary act of obedience, and the result of his great love to mankind. See John x. 15—18, xv. 13.



sible, and perhaps the disadvantage of dictating to an amanuensis, render his style obscure.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 15.

It is impossible not to remark how familiarly the apostle speaks of Christ as a man, in the same manner in which he speaks of Adam as a man, and without any of those cautions, and saving clauses, which believers in the divinity of Christ adopt in modern times, and which Paul would have found it necessary to introduce had he entertained the same opinion.

It is observable how the apostle labours to impress upon the minds of his readers, that the blessings entailed through the obedience of Christ were the free gift of God, and not such as had been purchased by this obedience, and which he was under obligation to bestow. It almost seems as if he had foreseen and was actually providing against the absurd doctrine of modern times, concerning the merits and righteousness of Christ being imputed to the sinner, and giving him a claim upon the divine mercy; than which nothing can be more contrary to the general tenor of scripture and the express declarations of the apostle.

The apostle now mentions two particulars in which the blessings of the gospel outweigh the calamities of the Fall.

In the first place, the curse was entailed for one offence only; the blessing provides justification from many offences, ver. 16.

*And not as in reference to one sin<sup>1</sup>, so also is the*

16.

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<sup>1</sup> In reference to one sin.] “ δι’ ενός ἀμαρτηματος.” Such is

Ch. V.  
Ver. 16.

*gift; for judgement followed from one sin to condemnation, but the free gift from many offences to justification.*

The subjects, both of the blessing and of the curse, are the same persons; that is, all mankind. But in magnitude the effects are widely different. One sin, of one individual, is visited by the mortality of all his descendants: What, then, must be the demerit of many sins, of all the transgressions of all mankind? Yet the free gift of divine mercy extends to all; and none who are willing to accept the offer are excluded from the blessing.

Secondly, The blessings of the state to which men are advanced, far surpass those of the state which was lost by the Fall, ver. 17.

17. *Moreover, if by one offence<sup>1</sup> death reigned through that one man, much more shall they who receive the abundant grace and gift of justification<sup>2</sup> reign in life through that other man Jesus Christ.*

Had the apostle been a correct writer, the antithesis would have stood in this form: Moreover, if

the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and of the Syriac and Vulgate versions: it is marked by Griesbach as probable, and is indeed required by the connexion. But Mr. Locke is mistaken in stating it as the reading of the Alexandrine copy.

<sup>1</sup> *By one offence.*] “εν ἐνὶ παραπτώματι.” This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other copies; and is marked by Griesbach as of considerable authority.

<sup>2</sup> *The abundant.*] “της χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς,” a periphrasis for τῆς χάρισματος, ver. 15, much more shall they who receive the transcending free gift of justification. “the abundantly gracious gift.” Wakefield.

by one offence death reigned through that one man, much more shall life reign through that other man Jesus Christ, in those who receive the abundant favour and gift of justification.

Ch. v.  
Ver. 17.

*q. d.* Moreover, as an additional privilege, if it be allowed that by the one offence of the first public person, namely Adam, all mankind became subject to mortality in consequence of their relation to him, much more reasonable is it to believe that the free gift of justification, which comes through that other public person Jesus Christ, the blessings of which far transcend the miseries of the Fall, shall entail life in its highest state of enjoyment and perfection upon those who have the happiness to be partakers of this invaluable gift.

It is plain, from the context, that the apostle does not mean to restrict the promised blessing of life to those only who now accept the offer of justification, but to extend it to all who are sufferers by the Fall; so that, as to number, the promised blessing will be co-extensive with that of the sufferers by the fall of Adam, and in value will far exceed those which were lost by that calamity. The gospel is now offered to all mankind, without exception; and eventually, all will be comprehended in its inclosure and will participate in its blessings.

4. The apostle draws his grand conclusion, that the superior blessings of the Christian dispensation extend to all who are sufferers by the Fall, ver. 18, 19.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 18.

*Therefore, as by one offence<sup>1</sup> judgement passed upon all men to condemnation, so by one act of righteousness the free gift is imparted to all men for justification of life. For, as by the disobedience of one man all<sup>2</sup> were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of the other man will all be constituted righteous.*

As the conclusion from the circumstances of resemblance which I have stated between Adam and Christ as public persons, it appears, that as in the case of Adam, all mankind were made subject to death, as the punishment of that one offence which he committed; so under the new dispensation, by one act of righteousness, this sentence is reversed, and the life which had been forfeited is graciously restored, in circumstances far more favourable than those under which it was lost. For, as by the transgression of the first Adam guilt was so far placed to the account of all his posterity, that all underwent the punishment of death; so, by the obedience of the second Adam, righteousness shall be so placed to the account of all those who were sufferers by the Fall, that they shall eventually be raised to life, and advanced to a state of perfect virtue and perfect happiness.

It is evident to all who are conversant with the

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<sup>1</sup> *By one offence.*] By the Fall, all become sufferers, though not chargeable with guilt; by the obedience of Christ to death, which ratified the new covenant, all become entitled to life by the free mercy of God, without any antecedent merit.

<sup>2</sup> *All.*] “οἱ πολλοί” literally “the many;” evidently used in the same sense as πάντες ἄνθρωποι in the preceding verse. “were constituted sinners:”—“made sinners; that is, treated as such.” Newcome. See ver. 15, note 1.

apostle's writings, that he delights in analogies and similitudes, some of which are carried to an extreme which may almost be considered as fanciful. Such, perhaps, is the allusion to the case of Abraham, in the preceding chapter ; to that of Sarah and Hagar, Gal. iv. 21, and that of Melchisedek, Heb. vii., if that epistle was written by him ; at any rate, these analogies are to be regarded as mere allusions and illustrations, and are not to be received as teaching abstruse and mysterious doctrines not to be found in other and plainer passages of the New Testament. A parallel is here drawn between the case of Adam and that of Christ : both of them are represented as public persons whose conduct entailed important consequences upon all mankind. Adam was a transgressor, his sin was reckoned to all his posterity, so far that all became subject to the punishment of death for his one transgression. Christ was a pattern of obedience ; he devoted himself to death, and his obedience is so far reckoned to all mankind, that, through the free goodness of God, all who became transgressors by Adam's fall are justified and made righteous by Christ's one act of obedience ; the sentence of death is reversed, and all are restored to life, in circumstances far superior to those from which Adam fell. But it is observable, that Christ, while performing this office, is expressly called a man, and not a single hint is anywhere given that, in order to accomplish the work assigned him, it was at all necessary that he should be any thing more than a man ; indeed had he been

Ch. v.  
Ver. 19.

Ch. V.  
Ver. 19.

a being of superior order, the parallel would not have held. And though the blessings introduced by Christ are represented as far superior to those which were lost by Adam, yet this is not ascribed to the superior dignity of Christ, but to the free mercy of God. And it is further observable, that the blessings imparted by Christ are represented as extending to all, without exception, who are sufferers by Adam's fall.

Now all this may be very well understood as illustrating the great mercy of God in the gospel dispensation, which not only admits Jews and Gentiles to equal privileges, but which reveals the gracious purpose of God to raise all mankind from the grave, and to restore them to virtue, happiness, and immortality. But if we carry the analogy further and receive and understand the apostle literally, we soon find ourselves involved in inextricable difficulties and absurdities ; the story of the Fall, as it stands in the book of Genesis, is a moral fable, and nothing else. Those who interpret it literally and who receive it as a fact, help out the story by the introduction of the devil, as an agent to inspire the serpent, of which Moses says not one word : thus they prop one fable by another, and this they call believing the inspired scripture. But if the account of the Fall is mere allegory, which undoubtedly it is, the parallel of Christ with Adam must be considered as an allegory likewise, and all the mysterious doctrines which have been deduced from the apostle's parabolical language must fall to the ground.

5. The apostle concludes his argument by stating, that though sin was multiplied by the introduction of the law, yet the grace of the gospel of Christ still prevailed against the most aggravated transgressions, ver. 20, 21. Ch. v.

*Now the law made a little entrance<sup>1</sup> that the offence might abound<sup>2</sup> : but where sin abounded, grace hath superabounded; that as sin hath reigned through death, so grace likewise might reign through justification unto eternal life<sup>3</sup>, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Ver. 20.  
21.

It may perhaps be apprehended, that if one transgression of a law, sanctioned by the penalty of death, introduced so much mischief and misery into the world, that the interposition of divine mercy in the gospel was necessary to rectify it, the case of those who commit many transgressions under a si-

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<sup>1</sup> *Made a little entrance.*] “παρεισῆλθεν, subintravit.” Vulg. “entered in privily.” Newcome. Gal. ii. 4. See Locke and Doddridge.

<sup>2</sup> *That the offence might abound.*] “so that offences abounded.” Newcome. *ἵνα πλευνασῇ*, so that the offence actually abounded: not that it was the design of the law to produce sin, but that sin was in fact the result. So *ἵνα πληρωθῇ* does not signify that the event in question was the object of the prophecy, but that the words of the prophecy were applicable to it. Matt. ii. 15; John xviii. 9, &c. *το παραπτωμα, ἡ ἁμαρτία*, the offence or fall: the sin Mr. Locke supposes to refer to that particular sin against which death was denounced by law. In paradise, death was the penalty of one transgression only: under the law it was the penalty of many offences; but the grace of the gospel extends to the forgiveness of all: where the offence abounds, grace superabounds.

<sup>3</sup> *Justification to eternal life:*] i. e. through the gospel; which is here called justification to eternal life, because it promises eternal life to those who believe. Comp. ver. 18 and ch. iv. 25.

Ch. v. milar law must be utterly hopeless : but this is not  
Ver. 21. a just conclusion.

It is true that the law of Moses, which, like that given to Adam in paradise, passes sentence of death upon every transgression, was introduced into the world, but it was only for a short time, and extended only to a single nation. In consequence of which, offences, like those of Adam, abounded ; and it might naturally be feared that judgements would proportionably abound. But such was not the fact, for the gospel provides a remedy even for this aggravated case : where sin abounded, grace has superabounded. The mercy of the gospel reaches beyond all the transgressions of the law.

That as sin has shown her malignity and her power by subjecting all mankind to death for the single offence of their first ancestor ; so grace, the free unpurchased mercy of God, might exhibit its unbounded authority and universal empire by rescuing from the power of death, and advancing to a happy and immortal life, all the miserable victims of the condemning sentence, whether of that law which was given to Adam, or of that which was declared by Moses ; and this glorious deliverance is revealed to us by Jesus Christ, our honoured master, through whom both Jew and Gentile are blended in one happy community, in which all are regarded as justified who believe in Christ <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The apostle's language is thus beautifully paraphrased and expressed by Dr. Taylor : " That as sin through the law has been set upon its throne by death, which is its power and do-



Upon this remarkable section we may reflect, First, that the apostle most confidently teaches, that all mankind, Jew or Gentile, are equally the objects of divine favour under the gospel dispensation, the great design of which is to rescue mankind from the grave, and to advance them to life, happiness, and immortality.

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Ver. 21.

Also, that his argument, if it proves any thing, proves that all, without exception, who have been sufferers by the Fall, shall be eventually raised to life and happiness.

But as the account of the Fall is precarious, and cannot be received as an historic fact, so the analogical argument borrowed from it must be regarded as proportionably precarious ; and can only be considered as an illustration of the apostle's doctrine, which is no doubt true, and of divine authority, even though the argument by which it is here supported is only available as an illustration of the writer's idea.

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minion over us ; so the Divine Grace might be placed upon its opposite and superior Throne through the gospel or grant of salvation unto eternal life, which grant of salvation is conferred through Jesus Christ our king and governour, and will be executed and completed by him."

## PART THE SECOND.

Ch. VI. THE GOSPEL CONTAINS THE MOST POWERFUL MOTIVES TO REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS TO ALL WHO BELIEVE, WHETHER JEW OR GENTILE. Ch. vi. 1,—viii. 11.

## CASE I.

*The gospel is efficacious for repentance and holiness in the believing GENTILE. Ch. vi.*

And the train of the apostle's argument upon this subject is, First, that the heathen, by his profession of faith in Christ, is risen to a new life ; and Secondly, that he has enlisted himself into a new service.

## SECTION I.

*The Gentile, by his profession of faith in Christ, has entered upon a new life, ver. 1—11.*

In order to illustrate the obligation of the converted heathen to a life of universal holiness, the apostle carries on a comparison between the life, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, and the present state of Christ, and the condition of a converted heathen ; and without a close attention to this illustration, the apostle's argument and phraseology will be misunderstood.

The heathen, in his unconverted state, is compared to Christ while fulfilling his personal ministry in the world. CH. VI.

The heathen, by his conversion to the Christian faith, becomes dead to his former state, as Jesus did by his crucifixion.

The convert from heathenism, being plunged into the water of baptism, becomes even buried to his former idolatry and vice, as Jesus Christ was buried when he was laid in the sepulchre.

When the converted heathen emerges from baptism he rises to a new life, a new state of existence, as Christ did when he rose from the grave.

The connexion between the converted heathen and the idolatries and vices of his former state, is as completely dissolved as that between Jesus and his enemies and persecutors since his resurrection.

And in particular the converted heathen is no more under the dominion of his former criminal habits and affections, than Christ is now in the power of those wicked rulers and persecutors who condemned him to death.

Also, the converted heathen, in his new state of existence, consecrates his whole life to God, as Jesus has consecrated to God his renewed existence, since his resurrection from the dead.

And finally, it is as unreasonable that a converted heathen should desire to return again to the follies and vices of heathenism and idolatry, as it would be for Christ himself to desire to exchange the glory and felicity of his present exalted state,

Ch. VI. for the mean and servile condition in which he passed the season of his public ministry.

This is the train of ideas in the apostle's mind ; it is not for us to inquire whether it is the most accurate and logical way of reasoning upon the subject ; at any rate it shows the apostle's decided judgement, that no proselyte from heathen idolatry could be regarded as a proper member of the Christian community who did not utterly renounce and disclaim all the vices of his heathen state, and yield himself up wholly to the service of God and the practice of universal virtue. With this clue the apostle's argument will become perfectly intelligible.

1. The apostle starts an objection which he immediately repels, ch. vi. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. *What shall we say then, Let us continue<sup>1</sup> in sin*  
 2. *that grace may abound? Far from it. We who are dead to sin, how shall we any longer live in it?*

*q.d.* I have shown that where sin abounded, grace and pardon have superabounded. This doctrine may indeed be misapprehended and perverted. The sensualist, who desires to enjoy the pleasures and to escape the condemnation of vice, may say, If the grace of God is illustrated and magnified in proportion to the magnitude of the offence, what should hinder me from indulging in sensual gratifications,

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<sup>1</sup> *Let us continue.*] επιμενωμεν. Griesbach marks this as the most probable reading, though he does not receive it into his text. The common reading is επιμενημεν, “ shall we continue.”

that the display of mercy in my pardon and acceptance may be more illustrious and wonderful? But shall we, my friends, who are converts from heathenism, and who publicly profess the doctrine of Christ, adopt a mode of reasoning so disingenuous and disgraceful? Far be the thought from us. With regard to our past heathen state, we are to all intents and purposes dead: dead to its superstitions, dead to its idol worship, dead to its impurities, its follies, and its crimes. How can we who are thus dead to heathenism, live in the practice of heathen vices? We can no more do it than a dead man can move and act as if he were alive.

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Ver. 2.

That the apostle in this chapter addresses the heathen only is evident, because, in the next, he particularly applies to those who are under the law; and this is one instance out of many in which the apostle uses the first person, though he is only speaking of converted heathen, a class to which he did not belong. Their conversion from heathenism to Christianity he describes as passing into a new state of existence, as death to an old, and resurrection to a new life; by which bold and impressive figure he justly and beautifully indicates the wonderful change which took place in the views, the character, the hopes, and expectations of a heathen idolater when he became a convert to the Christian religion.

2. The apostle observes, that converted heathen are, like Jesus Christ, dead and buried to their

Ch. VI. former state, and raised again to a new state of existence, ver. 3—7.

Ver. 3. *What! know ye not that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?*

Are you not aware that all of us who have made a public profession of our faith in Christ, have professed ourselves to be as completely extinct to the vices and idolatries of our heathen state, as Christ became dead to the world when he expired upon the cross?

4. *We are therefore buried with him by this baptism into death, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so likewise we might walk in newness of life.*

The ceremony of immersion in the baptismal water indicates that we are, like Jesus, buried to our former state, so that we have no more connexion with it than a dead body in the grave has with the living world.

But the analogy may be carried still further : for as we soon rise from the baptismal water, as Jesus by the power of God was after a short interval raised from the grave, this implies, that we also are raised like him to a new state of existence by our profession of the faith of Christ, and that we are to order our future conversation and course agreeably to the customs and manners of the new world into which we are introduced.

It seems probable that by the expression buried with him in baptism, the apostle alludes to immer-

sion as the general practice in that age and in those countries where bathing was frequent. But this by no means proves that immersion was the universal practice in the administration of the rite, especially as the word baptize is used in the New Testament, where nothing more is meant than pouring a little water upon the hands or feet of a guest previously to his taking his place at the table. See Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38<sup>1</sup>.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 4.

Some learned men have translated the text thus, *that as Christ was raised from the dead with a view to the glory of the Father*<sup>2</sup>: and this sense admirably well suits the apostle's design, which is to show that heathen are introduced into a Christian state with a view to the glory of God, that they may consecrate their new life wholly to his service. But though this is a sense which the words will bear, and which is supported by some very learned men, yet, as it is an unusual sense in this construction, I have adopted that which is most common. The apostle proceeds.

*For if we have conformed*<sup>3</sup> *to the resemblance of his death, surely we shall also conform*<sup>4</sup> *to that of*

<sup>1</sup> See Belsham's Plea for Infant Baptism, p. 60, Lett. v.

<sup>2</sup> *View to the glory.*] See Beza and Grotius *in loc.* Upon the same principle Dr. Lardner and Mr. Lindsey explain, Heb. i. 2, *ὅτι ἵνα*, "with a view to whom God made the dispensations or ages." See the note in the Improved Version. "by the power of the Father." Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *Conformed.*] *συνεσθῆναι*, planted together: hence it signifies a strict connexion or resemblance between one thing and another. See Rosenmüller. "It is here merely, *par, similis*: and has nothing to do with planting." Wakefield.

- Ch. VI. *his resurrection. Considering this, that our old*  
 Ver. 6. *man has been crucified with him, that the being of*  
*sin<sup>1</sup> might be destroyed, that we might no longer*  
 7. *be in slavery to sin: for he who is dead is set at*  
*liberty from sin<sup>2</sup>.*

If by our profession of faith in Christ we become dead like him to our former state, nothing can be more reasonable than that we should rise with him to a new and better state of existence. This may be illustrated by a similitude: Our former selves, in our heathen state, were slaves to the tyranny of idolatry and sin; this heathen self is now crucified as Christ was, and by this crucifixion we are become dead to sin and sin to us: all connexion between us is totally dissolved. For as when the slave is dead slavery ceaseth, so the heathen man, the former self, being crucified and dead, heathenism and its concomitant vices can no longer pretend to domineer over us. The present man, the new self, is at perfect liberty from the old intolerable yoke.

3. Believers in Christ are, like him after he was raised, to remain in the new state of existence into which they are introduced, and ought not to return back to their former state, ver. 8—11.

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<sup>1</sup> Surely, &c.] “*αλλα, profecto, utique.*” Rosenmuller. “*εσομεθα, esse debemus: ut, τι ποιησομεν,*” Luke iii. 14.” Rosenmuller. Wakefield says it has the force of an imperative, as Matt. v. ult.

<sup>2</sup> Being of sin.] Gr. “body of sin,” that is, sin itself.

<sup>3</sup> Is set at liberty.] “*δεδικαιωται*” literally, is justified; but as justification expresses deliverance, so to be justified is to be delivered.” Taylor. Comp. ver. 18.



*And we believe, that if we are dead with Christ, we should also live<sup>3</sup> with him.*

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 8.

If we acknowledge that by our baptismal profession we symbolize a death with Christ, we ought also to admit, that we are to resemble him in his renewed life as well as in his death.

*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him (for when he died<sup>4</sup> unto sin, he died once for all; but now he liveth, he liveth unto God): so likewise ye account yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus<sup>5</sup>.*

9.

10.

11.

Having been taught, as the fundamental principle of the doctrine of Christ, that our great prophet was raised from the dead to an immortal life, so that he can never again become subject to mortality (for having once died to his original state of frailty and suffering, he has suffered death once for all, without being ever subject to a repetition of the stroke, and being raised to life by the power of God, he dedicates his renewed and continually supported life to the glory of God), do ye therefore imitate his great example. Regard yourselves as wholly dead to your former heathen state and vicious practices, but as

<sup>3</sup> *We should also live.*] συζήσωμεν, the Hebrew future, which expresses fitness as well as futurity. See ver. 5, and Rosenmüller's note. "we cannot but think and believe that we should lead a life conformable to his." Locke. See Wakefield.

<sup>4</sup> *When he died.*] So Wakefield. "Ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανε, 'O pro Kaf & quantum attinet, quod attinet ad." Rosenmüller.

<sup>5</sup> *In Christ Jesus.*] The received text adds, "our Lord;" but these words are wanting in the best MSS. and are omitted by Griesbach.

Ch. VI. enjoying a new life through your profession of the  
Ver. 11. Christian religion, which new life you are deter-  
mined, like Christ, to consecrate to the service of  
God.

Observe here that Christ is said to die to sin, and the Roman converts are exhorted to consider themselves as also dead unto sin. It is plain, therefore, that the apostle does not mean to say that either Christ, or they, died as an expiation for the sins of others. The apostle plainly means, that each of the parties was dead to their former state, which state he calls sin; and by sin, as applied to converted heathen, he evidently intends their original state of idolatry and vice. As applied to Christ, it perhaps expresses that state of frailty and suffering to which our Lord was exposed during his personal ministry, sin and suffering being regarded by the Jews almost as convertible terms; or, it may express a state in which he was persecuted by sinners, by Jews and Gentiles, by rulers, priests and people, by whom he was charged with sin and treated as an offender.

## SECTION II.

*The heathen convert, by his profession of faith in Christ, is enlisted into a new service. Ch. vi. 12 to the end.*

1. The apostle exhorts the converted heathen, in their renewed state of existence, to give them-

selves up to the service of God, and not of sin, Ch. VI  
ver. 12—14.

*Let not sin therefore reign in your dead person*<sup>1</sup>, Ver. 12.  
*so as to obey it.*

Your heathen self is dead; do not act in your new and Christian state as if this dead body were revived, and re-animated by sin, and had returned to its former servitude. In other words, professing to be disciples of Christ, do not relapse into the vices of your heathen state.

*Neither present your bodies*<sup>2</sup> *to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your bodies to God as instruments of righteousness.* 13.

You are not now to live as in your former heathen state: do not then give yourselves up to the practice of vice, as you did when you served your old master sin; but, as those who have been raised to a new life, offer yourselves to your new master, to God, and consecrate all your powers to him, and to a life of virtue in obedience to his will.

*For sin must not exercise dominion*<sup>3</sup> *over you :* 14.  
*for you are not under the law, but under grace*<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *In your dead person.*] See Wukefield : *q. d.* in your dead selves. See ver. 11. The received text adds at the end of the verse, the words “ in the lusts thereof,” which are omitted by Griesbach on good authority. “ It is necessary,” says Mr. Locke, “ to bear in mind through this and the succeeding chapter, that sin is here spoken of as a person striving with men for the mastery over them to destroy them.”

<sup>2</sup> *Gr.* “ members.” See Worsley’s Translation. “ τα μελη, idem denotant quod το σωμα, ver. 12.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> *Sin must not, &c.*] So Wukefield, ο κυριουσσι. See ver. 8.

Ch. VI. You are now under a dispensation of mercy, and  
Ver. 14. not of terror ; it would therefore be peculiarly unbecoming and ungrateful in you to sin against so much mercy and forbearance.

2. The apostle expostulates and appeals to their own feelings as to the disingenuousness of such a conduct, ver. 15.

15. *What then? shall we continue in sin' because we are not under the law, but under grace? Far from it.*

Reflect : put the question to yourselves. The law condemns, the gospel forgives ; shall not gratitude operate more powerfully than terror ? Shall we abuse the mercy of God because he is unwilling to execute justice ? Surely, we spurn the thought of such base and unworthy behaviour.

3. The apostle expresses his satisfaction, that having quitted the service of sin they had entered themselves as the servants of righteousness, ver. 16—18.

16. *Know ye not, that to whomsoever ye present yourselves to yield obedience, ye are the slaves of him whom you obey, whether of sin unto death<sup>2</sup>, or of obedience unto justification?*

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<sup>2</sup> *Grace,*] i. e. the gospel, a dispensation of mercy, as distinguished from law : in this connexion the technical word grace, seems preferable to the modern term favour.

<sup>1</sup> *Continue in sin.*] ἀναπαύεσθαι. “ can any so far mistake this happy dispensation as to make it a reason for continuing in a sinful course ? ” Taylor.

Be assured it is no light matter what master you choose, whether sin or righteousness ; for as is the master such will be the service, and such the wages and the reward. If you choose sin as your master, you will live in the practice of vice ; and death, ruin here, and misery hereafter, will be your reward : but if righteousness be your master, you will live in obedience to the will of God ; and pardon, peace, and final happiness, will be your portion. You will be entitled to all the privileges and promises of the gospel both here and hereafter.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 16.

*But thanks be to God, that having been the slaves of sin you have now obeyed<sup>b</sup> from the heart the mould of doctrine into which you were delivered.*

17.

But, though I speak hypothetically, I thank God you have not now your choice to make. In your late heathen state you were indeed slaves to idolatry and vice : you are now totally changed. You have been cast into the mould of the gospel, and you have taken a fair impression of the sacred die ; you bear the image of Christ ; and the inscription is holiness and universal virtue.

*Having then been set at liberty from sin, ye are become the slaves of righteousness.*

18.

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<sup>a</sup> Some good copies omit *εἰς θάνατον*, to death. See Griesbach.

<sup>b</sup> *Thanks, &c.*] Gr. “ thanks be to God that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed,” &c. The apostle’s meaning is obvious : the allusion is to the melting of metal, and casting it into a die or mould to receive a new impression. See Taylor and Doddridge. thanks “ that *though* ye were, &c. *yet* ye have obeyed.” Newcome.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 18.

Though you have renounced the tyranny of sin, you do not profess to be wholly without restraint; but in your new state of existence you have bound yourselves to a new master, even righteousness, and have covenanted to submit to the laws and regulations of the community of which you are now members.

4. The apostle, apologizing for his figurative language, urges them to be as obedient to their new master, as they formerly had been to their old tyrant, ver. 19.

19. *I speak familiarly because of the infirmity of your nature*<sup>1</sup>. *As you have presented yourselves*<sup>2</sup> *as slaves to impurity and to iniquity, to practise iniquity; so now, present yourselves as slaves to righteousness, to practise holiness.*

I use the familiar comparison of a slave changing his master, that you may more easily comprehend a subject which must be new and difficult to those who have been educated in the practice of heathenism, and who can hardly form a correct conception of that total change which their new profession requires. When a slave becomes the

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<sup>1</sup> *I speak familiarly.*] So Wakefield. “ανθρώπων λεγω, after the manner of men, *humano more loqui, populariter*, as opposed to the elevated language of poetry, or the subtlety and obscurity of philosophers.” Rosenmuller, who gives instances of this use of the phrase. “because of the infirmity of your nature. *Infirmitas, haud raro usurpatur de intellectus tarditate.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> *Yourselves.*] Gr. “τα μέλη, your members, *pro εσυτες*, yourselves, all your powers.” Rosenmuller. See ver. 13.

property of another, his former master, as you are well apprized, loses all his authority, and all his powers are engaged to the service of his new proprietor. Upon the same principle, As in your heathen state you devoted yourselves to the service of your impure idolatries, so as to commit all manner of evil without remorse, and even as an act of respect and homage to your obscene deities; so now, being redeemed and set at liberty from your former tyrant, and having been purchased by another master, act agreeably and to your present condition, and yield an obedience as entire to your new proprietor, righteousness, and perform the duties of holiness and the works of virtue, under the dominion of the gospel, with as much zeal and activity as ever you obeyed the authority of sin.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 19.

5. The apostle enforces his exhortation by the consideration of the different nature and issue of the service which they have forsaken, and that to which they are now engaged, ver. 20—22.

*For when ye were slaves of sin, ye were at liberty from righteousness.*

20.

You could not serve two opposite masters at the same time; you could not be heathen and Christians both at once. The words sin and righteousness here, and in many parts of this epistle, express heathenism with its crimes, and the gospel with its blessings.

*What fruit then had ye at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? Moreover, the end of those things is death.*

21.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 21.

You now see the idolatry and the sinfulness of your heathen state in their proper light ; you blush to recollect the folly of your worship and the dissoluteness of your character ; and did you then at the time derive any advantage or gratification from the practice of vice, which you can now regard as any thing like an adequate compensation for this gross self-degradation ? And when it is considered that such conduct must eventually terminate in final ruin, what folly can be greater than that of persisting in a bondage so odious and oppressive ?

22. *But now, being set free from sin and become slaves of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

If the question be now asked, What are the fruits of your present profession ? what are the advantages of the service of God to which by your renunciation of idolatry and the profession of faith in Christ you have bound yourselves by the closest ties ? the answer is ready, and there is nothing of which you need to be ashamed. The proper business of your present engagement is the practice of universal virtue ; its immediate recompense, the unspeakable peace which results from it ; and its ultimate reward is a resurrection to everlasting life and happiness.

6. The apostle concludes with a brief and impressive summary of the argument, ver. 23.

23. *For the wages of sin is death ; but the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, is eternal life.*



And, to bring the argument to a close, what I desire to impress upon the mind of the Gentile believer is, that the idolatries and crimes of a heathen state necessarily lead to condign punishment : if sin is the master, death will be the wages : death both here and hereafter, whatever may be implied in the terrible denunciation.

Ch. VI.  
Ver. 23.

Widely different will be the lot of those who bind themselves to the service of God, and who faithfully adhere to the terms of their new covenant. They can indeed make no claim upon their Maker upon the ground of merit and of right ; all have sinned, and all must plead guilty. What they receive is the gift of free, unmerited, unpurchased goodness ; and this gift, this free and gracious promise, which has been revealed to us by Jesus Christ, our honoured master and revered instructor, this divine gift, is nothing less than everlasting life, a resurrection from the grave to a glorious, a happy, and an immortal existence.

Such is the apostle's argument with the Gentile converts to prove, that though the privileges of the gospel are offered to all with the most perfect freedom, without regard to antecedent merit, and without subjection to the yoke of the ceremonial law, the Christian religion, nevertheless, lays its professors under the strongest obligations to the practice of virtue in all its branches, without which, their faith will be of no avail.

## CASE II.

Ch. VII. *The profession of the Christian doctrine efficacious for the sanctification of the converted Jew.* Ch. vii. 1,—viii. 17.

Under this head, the apostle first assures the believing Jew, that he is at perfect liberty to become a disciple of Christ, ch. vii. 1—4. II. He briefly sketches the case of a Jew under the law and under the gospel, ver. 5, 6. III. He describes at large the wretched situation of the awakened Jew, ver. 7—25. IV. He shows in what way the gospel operates to release believers from the condemning sentence of the law, and illustrates the opposite practical influence of the law and gospel. Ch. viii. 1—17.

## SECTION I.

*The apostle asserts the absolute freedom of the believing Jew from the yoke of the ceremonial Law.* Ch. vii. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *Know ye not, brethren, for I now speak to those who know the Law, that the Law ruleth over a man so long as it liveth<sup>1</sup>?*

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<sup>1</sup> *As it liveth.*] “as long as it is in force.” Wakefield. Dr. Doddridge very justly observes, that “it would be contrary to the apostle’s design to suppose the sense of this to be, as our translation renders it, as long as *he* liveth, for the apostle pro-

The apostle had hitherto been addressing the converted Gentiles, who were strangers to the law of Moses. He now turns to the believing Jew, who knew the law, who was firmly attached to it, and strongly inclined to combine the ritual of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. With regard to the Hebrew Christians who resided in Judea while the temple was standing and the Jewish polity continued, they were permitted, perhaps even enjoined, to comply with the rites of the *Mosaic Law*, which indeed constituted a portion of the political code of the country. But Jewish believers who resided in foreign parts, as for example at Antioch, at Corinth, or at Rome, were entirely emancipated from this yoke, could they have divested themselves so far of their early prejudices, as to have acknowledged and enjoyed their Christian liberty. But in general they were too zealously attached to the rites of Moses to be willing to renounce their authority; and so long as they did not impose them upon their Gentile brethren, their prepossessions were treated by the apostle with great lenity and indulgence.

In the beginning of this chapter, the design of the apostle is to state, in language as inoffensive as possible, the complete abrogation of the law of Moses, and the entire emancipation of Christian believers from its authority: which he describes as the dissolution of the marriage contract by the decrease of one of the parties.

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fessedly endeavours to prove that they had outlived their obligations to the law."

CH. VII.  
Ver. 1.

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 1. *g. d.* Having lived under the law, you understand the nature of a law, that the obligation of its authority continues till the law itself is repealed, and no longer.

2. *For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is alive: but if the husband be dead, she is discharged from the law of her husband.*
3. *If therefore she becomes the wife of another man, while her husband is living, she is called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is set at liberty from the law, so as to be no adulteress though she be married to another husband. And thus<sup>1</sup>, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law<sup>2</sup> by the person of Christ; that ye might be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we<sup>3</sup> might bring forth fruit unto God<sup>4</sup>.*

It is worthy of observation that the apostle had represented the Gentiles, antecedent to their con-

<sup>1</sup> “Ὡς for ὡς.” Rosenmuller. “It is used in comparison for *ut, sic, as, so.*” Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *Ye are become dead to the law.*] “For the law is become dead to you. A hypallage like that *Date classibus austros*, Set the winds to the fleet. By this manner of expression the prejudice of the Jew is favoured, who might have been disgusted if the apostle had said the law was dead; and yet the sense is the same, because the relation is dissolved, which soever of the parties be dead.” Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> *That we might.*] The apostle here changes the person, and joins himself with the believing Jews, in order, as Mr. Locke observes, to press his argument more strongly.

<sup>4</sup> *Bring forth fruit unto God.*] “and therefore the fruit which the gospel produces is living, and shall live for ever; but the fruit of sin under the law is as I may say still-born, is fruit unto death.” Taylor.

version, as in a state of bondage : they were slaves to idolatry and vice; but by their profession of the Christian religion they had become free men, they were translated to the service of God ; their duty was to practise virtue, and their portion everlasting life. But of the Jews who had lived under a divine dispensation he speaks with more respect. He represents them in their prior state as sustaining the relation of a wife to a husband, as in a state of affectionate subjection, not of cruel bondage.

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 4.

Attached as the Jews were to the law of Moses, they would naturally regard an abandonment of this law as an act of disloyalty and ingratitude to God who gave it. This objection the apostle obviates by representing the law to which they had been wedded, and which it would have been highly criminal to have abandoned till it was repealed, as now dead in consequence of the mission of Christ, who had been authorized to introduce a new dispensation. Under these circumstances, to give up their connexion with the law, and to embrace the Christian profession, was no more criminal than it is in a woman to marry a second husband when the first husband is dead.

To avoid, however, the harsh and offensive expression that the law was dead, which might have alarmed the prejudices of his Jewish readers, he says, with a considerable degree of verbal inaccuracy, but with an obvious and very intelligible meaning, *Ye are dead to the law ; that is, The law, your first husband, is dead to you.*

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 4.

*By the body, or person of Christ*; that is, by Christ himself, who by dying upon the cross abolished the law, which was crucified with him and rose no more. But Christ himself rose, and takes the place of the law: to him, that is, to his gospel, we are now wedded; and the design of this new and blessed connexion is, that we should produce those fruits of holiness in heart and life which God will approve and accept.

## SECTION II.

*The apostle briefly sketches the two cases of a Jew under the law and a Jew under the gospel, ver. 5, 6.*

*For when we were in the flesh<sup>1</sup>, sinful passions occasioned by the law<sup>2</sup> operated in us, so as to bring forth fruit unto death. But now<sup>3</sup>, being dead<sup>4</sup>, we are discharged from the law by which*

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<sup>1</sup> *In the flesh,*] i. e. under the law. See Rosenmuller, and Theodoret as quoted by him. Release from this state is described in the next verse as being discharged from the law.

<sup>2</sup> *Occasioned by the law.*] *τα δια τῶ νόμου*, see ver. 8, 11, where he explains his meaning more at large. *To bring forth fruit*, see ver. 4. While wedded to the law sin was the fruit, and death the consequence. *Operated in us.* Gr. "our members," i. e. ourselves.

<sup>3</sup> *But now,*] i. e. under the gospel: so *now* is frequently used, Rom. iii. 21, v. 9, 11, and many other texts which Dr. Taylor cites in his note, and which he thinks may prove a key to these and some other texts.

<sup>4</sup> *Being dead.*] *ἀποθανόντες*. This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Ephrem MSS. and adopted by Griesbach. The received text reads *ἀποθανόντος*, that being dead, viz. the law,

*we were bound, so that we may serve<sup>5</sup> according to the new spirit, and not to the old letter.* Ch. VII. Ver. 6.

I am addressing myself to those who, having been educated under the discipline of the law of Moses, are now believers in the doctrine of Christ. These will not deny that the tendency of a dispensation which denounces death without mercy upon every transgression, by driving sinners to despair, tempts them to run headlong on in a course of sin, the inevitable consequence of which is death; and we ourselves have probably felt the force of the temptation. But now, this dangerous connexion with the law being dissolved and totally abolished by the death of one of the parties, we are at full liberty to enter into a new service, upon new terms, and to bind ourselves to a master who will not exact the rigorous conditions of our former tyrant, but will accept our sincere though imperfect obedience.

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which is indeed the apostle's idea; but to avoid offence he here, as in verse 4, represents believers as the dead party, though his meaning obviously is, that the law, the first husband or master, being dead, the survivor is at liberty to enter into a new connexion.

<sup>5</sup> *Serve*] God, or righteousness, i. e. our new master, according to the new spirit, Gr. "in newness of spirit," &c. i. e. agreeably to the liberal spirit of the new dispensation, and not to the servile spirit of the old letter, the dispensation which required a literal compliance with every precept under the heaviest penalties.

## SECTION III.

Ch. VII. *The apostle describes at large the miserable situation of the awakened Jew, ver. 7—25.*

And for the illustration of this subject he makes use of a bold *prosopopœia*, or supposition of fictitious persons, in order to describe the situation of a Jew who, not having heard the tidings of the gospel, is just awakened to a sense of the danger and misery of his condition under the law; and for this purpose he introduces no less than five allegorical figures, to each of which he assigns a peculiar character and office.

The first is Mind, the understanding, the principle of virtue, which always discerns and approves what is right.

Secondly, Flesh, passion, irregular affections and desires, the tendency of which is to lead the mind astray; with which, however, Mind lived in harmony till the appearance of a Third person, viz.

Law, the law of Sinai, which reveals to Mind the criminality of all exorbitant affection and desire, which pronounces sentence of death upon every transgression, and allows no hope of pardon and no encouragement to repentance.

The Fourth personage is Sin, the inveterate enemy of Mind, continually aiming at its destruction; which, nevertheless, before the appearance of Law was in a dormant state, but which, taking advantage



of the discoveries, and of the inexorable nature of Law, enters into an alliance with Flesh, *i. e.* the passions, makes war upon Mind, takes it prisoner, and reduces it to a state of the most abject, hopeless, and miserable servitude, from which wretched and dangerous state it is at last delivered by the interposition of a Fifth person, viz.

Grace, the gift of God through Jesus Christ, the gospel dispensation, which, by proclaiming the joyful tidings of forgiveness, revives the spirits of Mind, animates her to renew the contest, and finally gives her a complete victory over sin and death.

From the seventh verse to the twentieth, the Mind, in a soliloquy, represents and laments over its own wretched situation. In the remainder of the chapter, the Jew in person describes his misery and his danger, and the seasonable and effectual interposition of Grace, or the gospel, for his relief.

1. The apostle introduces Mind, that is, the rational and voluntary powers, as a person complaining of insupportable bondage, but previously acknowledging the purity of the law which first made known the guilt of evil affections, ver. 7.

*What then shall we say? Is the law sin? By no means. Nay, I had not known sin<sup>1</sup> but through* Ver. 7.

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<sup>1</sup> *I had not known sin.*] Mr. Locke remarks, “ that the skill which the apostle uses in dexterously avoiding to give offence to the Jews is very visible in the word *I*, in this place. In the beginning of the chapter, where he mentions their knowledge of the law, he says *ye*. In the fourth verse he joins himself with them, and says *we*. But here and to the end of the chap-

Ch. VII. *the law. For I had not known evil desire to be*  
 Ver. 7. *sin, if the law had not said Thou shalt not desire*<sup>1</sup>.

When I say that evil affections were occasioned by the law, will any one suspect that I mean to charge the law of God as directly commanding vice? Nothing could be further from my intention. The law, in fact, only made known to me the nature and extent of the divine requisitions: for I should not have known that criminality attached to the affections, as unconnected with external actions, had not irregular desires been the object of an express prohibition.

2. Mind complains that Sin, her great enemy, taking advantage of the rigour of Law, roused the

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ter, where he represents the power of sin and the inability of the law to subdue it, he leaves them out, and speaks altogether in the first person, though it is plain he means all those who were under the law." See also ch. iii. 7. Dr. Taylor adds, "we may here observe another stroke of honest art, which appears to me still more masterly, and that is his demonstrating the insufficiency of law under colour of vindicating it." The fact however is, that this extreme caution of giving offence throws an almost impenetrable obscurity over the apostle's style, which is indeed abundantly compensated by exhibiting the liberality of his mind, and by the evidence which it affords of the antiquity and genuineness of the apostolic writings. No one, after the apostolic age, would have thought it worth while to have treated the Jewish prejudices with so much ceremony and indulgence.

<sup>1</sup> *Shalt not desire,*] *i. e.* Thou shalt not allow evil desire. This is plainly the meaning of *ἐπιθυμῆσαι* in this connexion. The word "covet" does not convey the true sense, being commonly limited to the desire of property. "I had not known the guilt of desire, unless the law had said Thou shalt not desire." Newcome. It was the doctrine of the Pharisees, that desire is not criminal if it does not proceed to overt acts.

dominant passions, and reduced her to a state of Ch. VII.  
pollution and condemnation, ver. 8—11.

*But sin, taking advantage<sup>2</sup> by the precept, pro-* Ver. 8.  
*duced in me every kind of evil desire.*

It was not law which did the mischief, but sin, which availed itself of the prohibitions of the law to excite those very passions which the law forbid.

*For before the law<sup>3</sup> sin was dead, and before* 9.  
*the law I was once alive. But when the precept*  
*came, sin came to life, and I died.*

Before I studied the law and became apprized of its extent and rigour, I went on quietly, without any tormenting consciousness of guilt, or temptation to sin; I thought well of my own state: but when I understood the strictness of the law, and saw that I was already exposed to its condemnation, sin told me I could not be worse let me do what I would, and by this means it acquired an entire ascendancy over me and annihilated all resistance.

*And the precept which was given for life, itself* 10.  
*proved to be for death. For sin taking advantage* 11.  
*by the precept deceived me, and by it slew me.*

The consequence was, that the very law to the

\* *Advantage,*] not opportunity merely. Sin used the law as an active and powerful instrument to attain its end. "Αφορμή, omnem apparatus subsidiorum ad aliquam rem perficiendam necessarium." Schleusner. "Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata." Ovid.

<sup>3</sup> *Before the law.*] Gr. "without the law," i. e. before I paid attention to it; but when the precept came, i. e. came to mind, when I considered it and gave attention to it. It is to be remembered that the apostle is not here speaking in his own person, but in that of an awakened Jew, who thus describes his own feelings. See Rosenmüller.

Ch. VII. observance of which was annexed the promise of  
Ver. 11. life, and which if I had obeyed it would have rewarded my obedience with life and happiness, was eventually a sentence of condemnation. For sin, deceiving me into the belief that I could not be worse than I was, and that the precept was impracticable, availed itself of the very discoveries of the law to seal and aggravate my condemnation.

3. This unhappy condition to which Mind is brought by no means derogates from the excellence of Law, but only serves to demonstrate the malignity of Sin, ver. 12, 13.

12. *So then, the law is holy, and the precept is holy, and just, and good.*

I mean no reflection upon the Mosaic law, it was well calculated to answer its purpose of separating the descendants of Abraham from the rest of mankind ; and the particular precept which imposes restraint upon evil desire is a most reasonable injunction, and if it were obeyed would be productive of unspeakable benefit.

13. *Did then that which is good become death to me? By no means ; but sin only<sup>1</sup>. So that sin appeared working death in me by that which is good ; so that, through the precept, sin became exceedingly sinful.*

Law was perfectly innocent ; law only delivered the precept, and declared the penalty. Sin was the

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<sup>1</sup> *But sin only.*] I follow the punctuation of Griesbach. See Newcome's inner margin.

sole cause of the mischief done, and herein sin exhibited her own peculiar malignity, in converting that which was in itself excellent, which was intended as a rule of life, and which if obeyed would have given a title to life, into an instrument of death.

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 13.

4. Mind continues to enlarge upon its own deplorable condition, as the helpless miserable slave of Sin, whose organ it is compelled to be, without a possibility of successful resistance, ver. 14—20.

*For I know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold to sin.* 14.

It is of great consequence to recollect that the apostle is not speaking in his own person, but in that of a Jew under the law ; who, being awakened to a sense of the evil of sin and a desire to forsake it, is thrown into despair, and hardened in guilt, by the unrelenting severity of the law. In this affecting soliloquy the understanding is stating and lamenting her cruel fate. *q. d.*

I am now clearly convinced that the law was not given merely to regulate men's external actions, but to govern their affections and their thoughts ; whereas my affections are debased, and evil habits domineer over me as much as if I had been actually sold as a slave to vice.

*For what I do, I know not<sup>2</sup> : for what I would, that I do not practise ; but what I hate, that I do.* 15.

<sup>2</sup> *I know not.*] *ο γινωσκω*, i. e. as some understand it, "I approve not." See Hos. viii. 4 ; Matt. vii. 23 : or as others,

Ch. VII. I am no longer under my own direction, nor  
Ver. 15. subject to my own choice and approbation; I know not what I shall be driven to next; the tyrant to whom I am in bondage compels me to service which I disapprove and hate, and will not permit me to follow the dictates of my own understanding and will.

16. *But if I do that which I do not will, I assent*  
17. *to the law that it is excellent. Now then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.*

Being thus irresistibly urged on to commit the wickedness which I abhor, I bear my testimony to the excellence of the law which I am thus driven to transgress, and can hardly be said to be more accountable for my conduct, when thus impelled by the tyrant sin which occupies my active powers, than the poor demoniac is when he is possessed and hurried into acts of violence by an evil spirit.

18. *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good: for to will is present with me, but I find no ability<sup>1</sup> to perform that which is good.*

Such is the opposition between the understanding and the affections. I know well that in my inferior self, in the appetites and passions, there is always a tendency to excess; and in my present state, while under the law, they bear the sway.

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"I do not understand," *in scius et invitus facio*. I am a slave no longer under my own direction. See Rosenmüller.

<sup>1</sup> I find no ability.] "*οὐχ' ἐύρισκω, sed perpetrare rectum non valeo: ἐύρισκεν, assequi posse.*" Rosenmüller.

My best self, my understanding, enlightened by the law, is desirous to keep the commandment of God; but the inferior powers prevail, and I am utterly unable to pursue the course which my best powers dictate and approve as the most excellent.

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 18.

In this passage the Jew himself appears to be the speaker, the apostle not being solicitous to adhere strictly to his personification.

*For I do not the good I would; but the evil which I would not, that I practise. Now if I do that which I would not do, it is no longer I that perform it, but sin which dwelleth in me.* 19.  
20.

This may still be considered as the language of the Jew. I desire to obey the law, but I am not able; I desire to avoid transgression, but am continually impelled into it. Reason and virtue are dethroned; Sin has taken possession of my active powers, and I am no longer my own master; Sin domineers over me as the possessing spirit drives and agitates the wretched demoniac.

5. The Jew, in his own person, now proceeds to express the miserable conflict which took place in his mind while he remained subject to the law, till the mercy of God in the gospel administered relief, ver. 21—25.

*I find therefore this law for me<sup>2</sup> when desirous to do what is right, that evil adheres<sup>3</sup> to me.* 21.

\* *This law for me.*] “*Dictamen dicere possis propter aliquam cum legibus similitudinem.*” Rosenmuller.

<sup>3</sup> *Adheres to me.*] “*Παρακείται* sc. *a lotere adherere.*” Rosenmuller.

Ch. VII. I experience, says the enlightened and awakened  
Ver. 21. Jew, this melancholy fact, that it is become a sort of law in the moral constitution of my mind, that to the perception of moral excellence, and a desire to practise duty, are invariably conjoined vicious affections and a wicked life.

22. *For I delight in the law of God after the in-*  
23. *ward man : but I perceive another law in my mem-*  
*bers, making war against the law of my mind, and*  
24. *bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which*  
*is in my members. O wretched me ! who shall*  
*deliver me from this dead body ?*

I have one self, says the unhappy Jew here personated, my inward man, my reason and my judgment, which approves the law of God and delights in the practice of it. But I have another self, the law of the members, the appetites and passions which are continually waging war with my better self, which bring my reason into captivity to my inferior powers, and which bind me as a slave to vice and folly ; I am tied to this carnal self as to

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<sup>1</sup> *O wretched me !*] So Newcome. Gr. " O wretched man I."

<sup>2</sup> *This dead body.*] Gr. " the body of this death." " This continual burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious as a dead carcase tied to a living body, to be dragged about with it wherever it goes." Dr. Doddridge ; who notices the allusion to that species of torment, and justly adds that " a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented, cannot surely enter into the mind of man."

*Mortua quinetiam jungebat corpora vivis,  
Componens manibusque manus, atque oribus ora,  
Tormenti genus, et sanie, taboque fluentes,  
Complexu in misero, longè sic morte necabat.*

VIRGIL. Æneid. lib. viii.



a dead body, a noisome putrid carcase, which I loath and abhor, from which I continually desire and struggle to be released, but without effect. Such is my miserable and forlorn condition: to whom can I now look for relief? What friendly arm will rescue me from destruction?

Ch. VII.  
Ver. 24.

But the unhappy captive at length hears of deliverance: a voice exclaims,

*The grace of God<sup>3</sup> through Jesus Christ our Lord.* 25.

*g. d.* Hark! what tidings do I hear? A voice from heaven, proclaiming deliverance! It is GRACE, the favour of God, through Jesus Christ my Lord: it is the gospel of peace, which is revealed through Jesus Christ; which announces liberty to the captive, and a free pardon to the penitent. I am now inspired with a glorious hope, and can yield a cheerful and sincere obedience.

The discourse concludes with a brief recapitulation.

*So then, I, the same person, with my understand-* —25.

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<sup>3</sup> *The grace of God.*] ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ this is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts, and of the Latin Vulgate. It is ably supported by Mr. Locke, and it best suits the connexion. The miserable slave cries, Who can help me? A voice answers, Grace: the gracious gift of God: the gospel. This introduces a new person, who rescues the prisoner by slaying his adversary sin. The common reading is comparatively tame: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Abp. Newcome's note, however, is very pertinent: "I am delivered through, or by means of Jesus Christ, by whom we have greater assistances, stronger motives, clearer discoveries, and more gracious terms of final acceptance."

Ch. VII. *ing am a servant to the law of God, but with my*  
 Ver. 25. *flesh to the law of sin.*

I have represented myself, says the enlightened Jew, as divided into two persons, the understanding and the passions: the former approving and desirous to yield obedience to the law of God; the latter prone to evil, and enslaving the superior powers to vice; the consequence of which is, hopeless subjection to the condemning sentence of the law, from which nothing but the gospel can extricate the despairing transgressor.

#### SECTION IV.

Ch. VIII. *The apostle shows in what way the gospel operates,*  
*to release believers from the condemning sentence*  
*of the law; and illustrates the different practical*  
*influence of the law and the gospel.* Ch. viii.  
 1—17.

1. The apostle directly affirms, that believers in Christ are exempted from condemnation, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. There is *then, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus*<sup>1</sup>.

Under the law no man could escape from condemnation; because no one, however enlightened

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<sup>1</sup> The received text adds, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit;" which words are omitted by Griesbach, upon the authority of the Ephrem, Clermont, and other manuscripts and versions. The same words occur in a more suitable connexion at the end of ver. 4, from which they were probably transferred to this by the mistake of some early transcriber.

or however virtuous, could pretend to sinless obedience, and law shows no mercy to the penitent transgressor. But this rigid severity, and consequent misery, is abolished by the gospel, which repeals the sentence of death with respect to all who truly believe, and who become approved members of the community of which Christ is the head.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 1.

2. This great deliverance is effected by the gospel; which, by abolishing the severity of the law, gives the believer a victory over sin, ver. 2—4.

*For the law of the spirit of life by Christ Jesus, has set me at liberty from the law of sin and death.* 2.

The law of the spirit of life is the gospel: which is called a law, because it prescribes a rule of conduct, and enforces that rule by the most powerful sanctions. It is a law of the spirit, or a spiritual law, because its precepts are wholly moral, and is not like the Mosaic institute, to which it stands opposed, a law of rites and ceremonies, which for that reason is called carnal. The gospel is also a law of life, because it reveals the doctrine of a future life, and opens the way to it for all sincere believers in Christ.

And it is this glorious gospel which sets the captive and suffering Jew, who is awakened to a sense of his danger and misery, at liberty from the yoke of the old dispensation, which, by plunging him into despair, hurried him into sin, and then, by an irrevocable sentence, condemned him to death.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 3.

- For what it was impossible for the law to do, because it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, hath done: he hath condemned sin<sup>1</sup> in the*  
 4. *flesh<sup>2</sup>, so that the righteous precepts of the law might be fully performed by us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.*

Here observe, that the great design of the law was to destroy sin, and to deter men from the practice of it, by denouncing the penalty of death.

Nevertheless, this important object could not be effected by the law, which, as we have seen in the case just described, only served to drive men to despair and to harden them in vice.

The law was *weak through the flesh*, because

<sup>1</sup> *He hath condemned sin.*] Κατέχειν “The prosopopœia,” says Mr. Locke, “whereby sin was considered as a person all the foregoing chapter, being continued here, the condemning of sin cannot mean, as some would have it, that Christ was condemned for sin, or in the place of sin; for that would be to leave that person alive which Christ came to destroy. But the plain meaning is, that sin itself was condemned or put to death.

<sup>2</sup> *In the flesh.*] ἐν σαρκί: i.e. says Mr. Locke, “in the flesh of Christ, for in him was no sin.” Rosenmuller explains it, “*destruxit vim pravarum cupiditatum in nobis*, he destroyed sin in us;” and Koppe, “*puniit peccatum in homine aliquo nempe in Christo*, he punished sin in the person of Christ.” “God condemned or destroyed sin in the flesh, so that it shall not reign in our mortal body.” Taylor. It must be owned, that the apostle often changes the sense of his words without giving notice of the change; but as in this discourse flesh is repeatedly put for the law, and spirit for the gospel in opposition to it, I am willing to adhere to this sense where it is not absolutely necessary to change it. And in this instance I understand condemning sin in the flesh to signify, enabling the Jew, who had been the slave of sin under the law, to subdue and mortify it by faith in the gospel.

it imposed a burdensome and painful ceremonial, which had no power to obtain forgiveness and to clear the mind from guilt. But this effect of destroying sin in the flesh, of subduing it in the hearts of those who, living under the law, were enslaved to sin, God has graciously accomplished.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 4.

He has sent Jesus Christ, his own son, the chief of all the prophets of God, and the first-begotten from the dead, to accomplish this great work. And to this end, he was born a Jew ; and like other Jews he was subject to the ceremonial law, and there was nothing in his appearance which would lead any one to conclude that he was in any respect superior to the rest of his countrymen.

*He was sent for sin, or upon the subject of sin*<sup>3</sup>. The design of his mission was to take away sin, by introducing a new and spiritual dispensation consecrated with his own blood, which offered mercy to the penitent sinner, and released him at once from the rites, and from the curse of the law.

The gracious design and the happy result of all is, that the righteous precepts of the law, which, though it required the practice of virtue, was unable to enforce obedience, might be and actually are fulfilled by those who believe in Jesus, who are not

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<sup>3</sup> Locke and Whitby, and most other commentators, interpret the phrase *περι αμαρτιας*, as signifying an offering for sin. But Dr. Taylor justly observes, that its proper and natural sense is, *about, concerning, in relation to, sin*: "And therefore," says he, "I doubt not it has relation to all that Christ has done to deliver us from the condemning and reigning power of sin, that we might be freed from the guilt of sin, and that the body of sin might be destroyed."

Ch. VIII. nominal believers only, but practically such ; and  
 Ver. 4. who regulate their conduct, not by a rigid adherence to the rites and ceremonies of the law, but by the precepts and the spirit of the gospel.

3. The apostle describes and contrasts the character and state of those who live after the flesh and after the spirit ; or, in other words, the adherents to the law, and the converts to the gospel<sup>1</sup>, ver. 5—9.

5. *For they who are according to the flesh, mind the things of the flesh ; but they who are according to the spirit, the things of the spirit.*

They who are devoted to the law, occupy themselves wholly with legal observances and ceremonial institutions ; while they who embrace the gospel, who understand its nature and imbibe its spirit, are indifferent to external rites, and attend wholly to moral obligations.

6. *Now, the minding of the flesh is death, whereas the minding of the spirit is life and peace.*

Let it be further considered that they who place their confidence in the law to the rejection of the gospel, cannot possibly escape its condemning sentence ; while they who rely upon the mercy of the gospel, and who comply with its terms, shall be saved from condemnation, and shall enjoy pure and uninterrupted happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the interpretation which I assign to the words, flesh and spirit ; though with some diffidence, being aware how often the apostle changes the meaning of his terms without any previous notice.

*Because the minding of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be, and they who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Ch. VIII.

Ver. 7.

8.

An obstinate adherence to the Mosaic ritual, now that it is superseded by the gospel, must be highly offensive to God, being an insolent rejection of his offer of mercy. If indeed the votary of the law could fully act up to the requisitions of the law, the case would be different. But this is impossible. The most active zealot for the law is, notwithstanding all his zeal, a condemned transgressor. Nor can it possibly be otherwise; for human nature is utterly incapable of a complete conformity to the terms of the law, and therefore they who seek for justification from the law only, must appear as convicted offenders in the sight of God.

*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, seeing that<sup>2</sup> the spirit of God dwelleth in you; but if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.*

9.

But though I express myself with this apparent severity in regard to the obstinate adherents to the law, I am persuaded, my brethren, that this character does not apply to you; but that you are all

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\* *Seeing that.*] “*εἰς*,” since.” Newcome, who refers to 2 Thess. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 3, 17; and adds, “The Christians at Rome are spoken of as a collective body, and are supposed to be spiritually-minded, because they were strongly obliged so to be, having received the extraordinary gifts of God’s spirit. However, the apostle adds, to be Christ’s indeed, they must have the mind or disposition of Christ.” See ver. 10.

Ch. VIII. sincere believers in Christ, and interested in the  
 Ver. 9. blessings of the gospel: for though you may not be so much distinguished as other churches are by spiritual gifts and miraculous powers, yet it is evident that the spirit of the gospel, which is the spirit of God, resides in you in a more important sense, in its moral influence upon your characters and lives. And be assured that he who does not in this sense possess the spirit of Christ, whatever his pretensions in other respects may be, will never be acknowledged by him as his disciple, nor admitted to those honours and rewards which are promised to the faithful and obedient.

4. By the sincere profession of the Christian doctrine, they are become dead to their former state, and alive to the hopes, the spirit, and the privileges of the gospel, ver. 10, 11.

10. *But if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of justification*<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Body—spirit.*] In this difficult and elliptical phraseology, I take *σωμα*, the body, to be used in the same sense as *σαρξ* in the preceding context, as expressing the law or the state of things under the law; and *πνευμα* to mean the gospel or the gospel state, *q. d.* the true believer in Christ renounces the law, because it leaves him in a state of condemnation and supplies no motives to exertion; but the gospel is a living principle, which announces pardon, and thus becomes a source of life and activity. I prefer this interpretation, because it retains the proper force of *δια* before an accusative. Mr. Locke, Dr. Taylor, and others, taking *σωμα* and *πνευμα* in a moral sense for evil and good affections and principles, render *δια* with respect to sin, and to righteousness.



If you are true believers in the doctrine of Christ, and acknowledged members of the Christian community, you are completely separated from your former state, as a living person from one that is dead; and the law is justly abrogated, because it was incompetent to subdue sin, and left its adherents under a sentence of condemnation.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 10.

But the gospel lives; it rescues the believer from the sentence of the law, and so it becomes a living principle of holiness and virtue.

*But if the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, because of his spirit<sup>2</sup> which dwelleth in you.* 11.

If you are indeed members of the Christian community, if you are true worshipers and faithful servants of God, who attested and authenticated the divine mission of Jesus Christ by raising him from the dead, you thereby ensure your title to all the promises and privileges of the gospel covenant.

\* *Because of his spirit.*] This is the reading of Griesbach, upon the authority of the best manuscripts. The received text reads, δι' τοῦ ἐνοικησάντος, by his spirit, &c.

By enlivening the mortal body, Mr. Locke understands "deliverance from the reign of sin in the body by the spirit of God, which is given to believers, and dwells in them as a new quickening principle and power." But as the actual resurrection of Christ is twice mentioned by the apostle in this sentence, I think it more probable, with Dr. Taylor and others, that the apostle is here speaking of a real resurrection to life and happiness, which is promised to those who receive and obey the gospel. Observe how directly and repeatedly the resurrection of Christ is here attributed to the Father, and not to any power inherent in Christ himself.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 11.

And be assured, that the omnipotent Being who performed that glorious miracle, by which the founder and head of this new dispensation was made in his own person, not only the proof, but the pattern and the pledge of immortality to his followers, will in due time raise you also to a happy and immortal life, as the promised reward of that spirit of faith and purity which was implanted in you by the gospel, and which has been exemplified in your conduct.

5. Hence it follows, that the disciples of Christ are released from all obligation to observe the ceremonial law, ver. 12, 13.

12. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the*  
13. *flesh, that we should live after the flesh*<sup>1</sup>; *for if ye live after the flesh you will die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body*<sup>2</sup>, *you shall live.*

The great conclusion from the preceding obser-

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<sup>1</sup> *Therefore, brethren, &c.*] Dr. Taylor thinks that the apostle here draws his grand conclusion from the doctrine which he has advanced in the two preceding chapters, relating to the efficacy of the gospel for the sanctification both of the Gentile and the Jew, and that the remainder of this chapter is addressed to believers in general, both Jew and Gentile. Mr. Locke thinks that the case of the Jew is finished in the seventh chapter, and that the whole of the eighth is addressed to believers in general: I have followed the division of Griesbach.

<sup>2</sup> The word *body* is here plainly used in the same sense as flesh in the preceding verse, *i. e.* the law; and this confirms the interpretation given, ver. 10. It must however be acknowledged, that “*της σαρκος*, the flesh,” is the reading of some of the best copies.

uations, and that to which I desire to draw your particular attention, is this: 'That we who are disciples of Christ are under no obligation of allegiance to the law; and the reason is that which I have so often stated, namely, that if you seek for acceptance with God upon the ground of legal obedience only, you must fall under the condemning sentence of that inexorable dispensation; whereas, if by accepting of the offers, and acting up to the liberal spirit of the gospel, you vanquish those vicious habits which are stimulated and confirmed by the severity of the law, you will be received into favour, and will eventually be put into possession of that everlasting life which is promised by the gospel.

CH. VIII.  
Ver. 13.

6. Of this privilege the gift of the holy spirit is a satisfactory evidence, as it both proves that God avows the relation of a father, and generates a filial spirit in those who possess it, ver. 14—17.

*For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.* 14.

All who have been induced by the consideration of the miraculous powers communicated to Christ and his apostles, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, are nominally sons of God; and if they are practically influenced by the spirit of the gospel, they are really such, and heirs of immortality.

*For ye have not again<sup>3</sup> received the spirit of* 15.

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<sup>3</sup> *Again received, &c.*] This expression implies, that the apostle here considers himself as still addressing those who had before been under the yoke and bondage of the law.

Ch. VIII. *bondage to fear, but ye have received the spirit of*  
 Ver. 15. *adoption, by which we cry Abba, that is, Father.*

Those of you who were formerly subject to the law, and who suffered under the weight of its yoke, and were alarmed by the inexorable severity of its denunciations, are now relieved from your bondage and your terror. Very different indeed is the spirit of the new dispensation, of which you now have the happiness to be members. From slaves you are become children; from bondage you have been introduced to liberty: and from a habit of regarding the author of our existence as an unrelenting judge, we,—for I was myself formerly in the same state of bondage and terror from which you have been recovered,—we, and all who enter into this new covenant, are allowed and encouraged to address our Maker as a father and a friend, to love him as our best benefactor, and to yield a filial and cheerful obedience to his commands.

16. *The spirit<sup>1</sup> itself beareth witness with us<sup>2</sup>, that we are the children of God.*

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<sup>1</sup> *The spirit itself beareth witness.*] As no apostle had yet visited Rome, and as the apostle himself expresses his desire to visit them, in order to impart some spiritual gift, which was the prerogative of the apostolic office (see Rom. i. 11), it is probable that the Roman Christians neither themselves possessed, nor perhaps had often witnessed the operation of miraculous powers; but they had no doubt received credible and satisfactory evidence of their existence, which had probably been the ground of their receiving the Christian faith.

<sup>2</sup> *With us.*] Gr. “with our spirits;” that is, with ourselves. The spirit of a man is a man himself, as the spirit of God is God himself. 1 Cor. ii. 11. See also Gal. vi. 18; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Philem. ver. 25.

Those gifts of the holy spirit, of the existence of which, though you may not yourselves possess them, you have no doubt been credibly informed, and which constitute the proper proofs of the resurrection of Christ, and of the divine original of the gospel, are the most satisfactory evidence that we can possess or desire that we are taken into the new covenant, that we are no longer subject to the terrors of the law, and that we are adopted into the family of God, and acknowledged by him as his children.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 16.

*And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.* 17.

And be it remembered, this title is not an empty name ; for, as on our part it implies duty and affection, so on the part of God, who condescends to acknowledge the relation of a father, it implies an engagement to treat us as children, and particularly to provide an inheritance for us ; an inheritance similar to that of which Jesus Christ, the first-born son, our dear elder brother, has already been put into possession, namely, a resurrection from the grave, to a new, a happy, and immortal life.

## PART THE THIRD.

CH. VIII. THE GOSPEL SUPPLIES ALL BELIEVERS, WHETHER  
JEW OF GENTILE, WITH THE BEST CONSIDERA-  
TIONS TO SUPPORT AND FORTIFY THE MIND IN  
THE SEASON OF PERSECUTION AND TRIAL, AND  
WITH THE MOST POWERFUL MOTIVES TO PER-  
SEVERANCE. Ch. viii. 17 *to the end*.

1. Fellowship in suffering with Christ is the appointed condition of participation in his glorious reward, —17.

Ver. 17. *Seeing we suffer<sup>1</sup> with him, to the end that we may be also glorified with him.*

The sufferings of Christ were the necessary preliminary to his glorification; and if we aspire to participate in his reward, we must be content to take it in the same way: we must be willing to suffer with him and for him. And surely we cannot complain if we are only called to share in the fate and fortune of our glorious leader.

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<sup>1</sup> *Seeing we suffer.*] "Observe," says Dr. Taylor with his usual judgement, "how prudently the apostle advances to the harsh affair of suffering. He doth not mention it, till he had raised their thoughts to the highest object of joy and pleasure, the happiness and glory of a joint-inheritance with the ever blessed Son of God. This, with the additional consideration that we suffer with Christ, would greatly qualify the transitory afflictions of this world, and dispose them to attend to the other arguments he had to offer."

2. The severity of the suffering bears no proportion to the value of the reward, ver. 18. Ch. VIII.

*For I compute<sup>2</sup> that the sufferings of the present season are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will hereafter be manifested to us.* Ver. 18.

The sufferings and persecutions which in the present state we are constrained to endure for the sake of our profession of the gospel are sometimes very severe, and difficult to be borne, and what no wise man would voluntarily submit to without sufficient reason ; and you well know that I, as the apostle of the Gentiles, have my full share of them. But whatever the world may think or say, I can assure you, that in submitting to these sacrifices and privations I have not been influenced by a spirit of enthusiasm or fanaticism, but have acted under the calm and deliberate conviction of judgement. For I have carefully counted the cost ; and I find upon accurate computation, that all I can do, or suffer, for the sake of Christ and his cause is nothing, and less than nothing, in comparison with that state of glory and happiness of which he is now in possession, and in which all his faithful and persevering followers shall hereafter participate. Under all your sufferings, therefore, keep this immense preponderance of advantage continually in view.

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<sup>2</sup> *I compute.*] Ἀνυψίζουσιν, "I find upon computation." Doddridge. "I look upon the sufferings of this present time as of no consequence with respect to," &c. Wakefield. οὐκ αξία, "as of no weight," "Vox deducta ex rebus quæ ponderantur." Rosenmüller.

Ch. VIII. 3. This glorious and happy state of things is that to which suffering nature instinctively points, and irresistibly tends, ver. 19—22.

Ver. 19. *For*<sup>1</sup> *the earnest longing*<sup>2</sup> *of the creation*<sup>3</sup> *waiteth for this manifestation of the sons of God*<sup>4</sup>.

I may add, that the actual state and condition of mankind makes it probable, not only that the virtuous believers in Christ will be put into possession of the promised inheritance, but that even they who

<sup>1</sup> *For,*] or *moreover.* This word introduces a collateral observation : not an inference from what goes before.

<sup>2</sup> *Earnest longing.*] “*αποκατάδοια, vehemens desiderium, καταδοικειν, caput exserere spectatum aliquid.*” Schleusner. “The ardent expectation even of the whole race of mankind considered in general as God’s creatures ; earnestly desiring a better state than this, like a poor prisoner, who often puts his head out of the window of his jail, and looks for relief.” Dr. Taylor ; who observes from Dr. Whitby, that “in the sacred dialect desire and expectation is ascribed to creatures in reference to the things they want, and which tend to their advantage, though they explicitly know nothing of them. Thus, the Messiah before he came is called the desire of all nations. Hag. ii. 7.”

<sup>3</sup> *Of the creation.*] *κτισεως*: the word creation or the creature in this text, I agree with Dr. Taylor in explaining of all mankind, and especially of the unbelieving world, see Mark xvi. 15, Col. i. 23 ; which interpretation he has justified in his notes. The various senses in which the word has been understood in this passage by different expositors may be seen in Rosenmuller *in loc.*

<sup>4</sup> *Manifestation of the sons of God.*] *αποκαλυψιν, κ. τ. λ. i. e.* the season when true believers shall be manifested to be indeed the sons of God by being put into possession of the promised inheritance. Locke and Wakefield translate *to the sons of God*, and suppose a reference to the preceding verse, in which glory is mentioned as hereafter to be manifested to true believers. That the genitive case is sometimes used objectively Mr. Locke argues, from Rom. i. 5. *et sim.* Either way the apostle’s meaning is the same.



are at present excluded, will ultimately attain a similar state.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 19.

For the whole unchristianized world, in their present condition, are like prisoners in a dungeon, wishing and waiting for relief, and stretching out their necks from the window of their prison, looking and longing for their expected deliverer.

Not indeed that they have correct ideas of their actual state, nor any explicit expectation of any thing better in reserve. But, bewildered in error, and enslaved to vice, they feel their misery, however ignorant of its cause, and have some title to hope, though they may not themselves be aware of it, that the benevolent and impartial Creator of all, who provides so munificently for the happiness of the virtuous believer who is taken into the relation of a son, will not ultimately forsake any of his rational and intelligent creatures. The happiness of those who are first chosen to salvation may be considered as a pledge and earnest of the eventual felicity of all mankind; so that, as the first fruits are holy and happy, the whole mass shall in the end be holy and happy too.

*(For the creation was made subject to vanity<sup>5</sup>;* 20.

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<sup>5</sup> *To vanity.*] “ το παρασιν, quodvis mutabile, calicum.” Rosenmuller. The apostle plainly refers to the state into which mankind were brought by the Fall. I follow Locke, who includes this verse in a parenthesis, except the two last words, which are connected with ver. 19. The creation waiteth, &c. in hope, that it shall itself be set free. Dr. Taylor objects, that this construction would imply, that all mankind wait, &c.; and such no doubt was the apostle's meaning, if he has any mean-

Ch. VIII. *not wilfully*<sup>1</sup>, *but by reason of him who made it*  
Ver. 20. *subject*<sup>2</sup>.)

And there is good reason why all mankind as well as believers should expect some improvement in their condition ; for, according to the account in the books of Moses, mankind were originally created innocent, happy, and immortal, but were soon reduced to their present frail and degraded state, not

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ing at all. His argument is, that as all mankind were brought into their present forlorn state, not by their own fault, but by the transgression of another, it is but reasonable that they should eventually be extricated from their miserable condition ; and that the salvation of believers, who became such by no merit of their own, but by the free grace of God in giving privileges to them which were denied to others, is a good ground to hope that all will eventually be advanced to the same holy and happy state.—The argument here is similar to that in chap. v. 12.

Observe, the apostle argues upon the assumption, that the Mosaic account of the Fall is historically true. But the argument is equally valid, whether that narrative be an historical truth or an allegorical fiction.

This is one of the strongest passages in the New Testament, in favour of the Universal Restoration of all mankind to virtue and happiness ; nor do I see what sense can be made of it upon any other interpretation.

<sup>1</sup> *Not wilfully.*] οὐκ ἐκούσα. Compare Heb. x. 26, 2 Pet. iii. 5. “ not by its own criminal choice.” Dr. Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> *On account or by reason of him who made it subject :*] διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα. In consequence or upon occasion of Adam's sin, God subjected mankind to vanity. See Taylor. It is disputed who is the person intended by τὸν ὑποτάξαντα. Mr. Locke understands it of the devil, who was the tempter ; Dr. Taylor of God, who instituted the penalty and passed the sentence. The construction seems to require that Adam should be understood : *q. d.* mankind were made subject to vanity, not through their own voluntary act, but on account of the transgression of Adam ; in which they had no concern, but which by the divine constitution involved in its consequences the whole human race. “ *Propter creatorem.*” Rosenmüller.

by any voluntary act or fault of theirs, but by the folly and transgression of their first ancestor; in consequence of which they were, by the awful sentence of God, made subject to sin and death. It seems equitable, therefore, that in due time they should be restored to their original state; and the reward which is promised to the virtuous believer is a pledge and foretaste of what is ultimately intended for all. And the painful consequences of their vanity and folly in the present state, as they excite a wish of a better condition of existence, may be figuratively represented as an earnest, though virtual, expectation of it. Thus they wait,

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 20.

*In hope, that even this very creation<sup>3</sup> also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* 21.

Having been placed by their wise and good Creator in circumstances of such great natural and moral disadvantage, without any fault of their own, it is reasonable to expect that he will not leave them there to perish, and to curse their existence, but

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<sup>3</sup> *Even this very creation.*] See Wakefield. “καὶ αὕτη ἡ κτίσις” the expression is universal and emphatic. The self-same creation which suffered by the Fall, is to be set free from the bondage of corruption, and to receive the blessing of liberty. “The creation itself,” Dr. Taylor well observes, “is all mankind, as well as Christians.” But he adds, “this is to be understood of mankind only so far as, by answering the ends of their creation, they are prepared for immortality.” It is observable, however, that the apostle uses no such limitation: he extends the promise to all who suffer by the Fall. All, without reserve, shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God: i. e. all shall be restored, first to virtue and then to happiness.

Ch. VIII. that he will ultimately advance them to a better  
Ver. 21. and a happier state; and the accession of true believers (who without any antecedent merit were placed in circumstances of superior privilege,) to the happiness promised by the gospel, forms a strong moral presumption that even the unbelieving world, who without any fault of their own were naturally placed in a state of servitude to idolatry, and sin, and death, shall in their turn likewise be rescued from their cruel tyrants, be put into possession of their moral liberty, be adopted into the family of God, and be made partakers of the glorious and divine inheritance.

22. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth together, and is in labour together unto this day.*

And this in fact is all that I mean, when I state that the unbelieving world are longing after a better state of things. They have indeed no explicit expectation of it, nor have they any just ideas of the means by which they were brought into their present forlorn condition, or of the wise and merciful designs of God for their recovery and restoration. But they feel their ignorance, their weakness, and their misery; and their wise men and philosophers are labouring, but to little purpose, to remedy the evil. They are as it were in the pangs and throes of child-birth; and their moral state is so desperate that it seems almost to demand a divine interposition to rescue his human offspring from destruction. Such is the present state of the heathen world, of

which it is impossible that you who reside at Rome, the imperial city, the chief seat of idolatry and vice, can be ignorant. Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 22.

Such are the glorious topics of consolation which the apostle suggests to his suffering friends, and by which he animates them to persevere in their attachment to the Christian faith. Not only are they encouraged to hope for a reward which will, beyond all comparison, outweigh their present sufferings, but they are taught to regard their own election to present privileges and their future exaltation to happiness, as an argument that all their brethren of mankind, not even excepting their enemies and their persecutors, will ultimately share in the same happiness and glory. For as he has proved in the former part of the epistle, that believers have been favoured with inestimable privileges without any antecedent merit, so he here argues, that it is but equitable that they who have been placed in circumstances of great moral disadvantage without any fault of their own, should eventually, in their turn, be advanced to the same privilege and happiness as their brethren; so that the whole human race will in the end equally share in the love and favour of the great Universal Parent.

4. The apostles themselves, and the primitive believers in Christ are in a similar state of suffering and persecution, ver. 23.

*And not only they, but ourselves also, who have*

23.

Ch. VIII. *the first fruits of the spirit*<sup>1</sup>, even we<sup>2</sup> groan within  
Ver. 23. *ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body*<sup>3</sup>.

And further, that you may not be discouraged by the sufferings you are called to endure, remember that you are not only fellow-sufferers with the unbelieving world, and with the mass of believers in general, but that we who are the apostles of Christ, and all those who are now living who saw Christ in the flesh, who conversed with him, who were witnesses to his resurrection, and participated in the earliest communication of the holy spirit, though we occupy the most honourable and the most important stations in his service, and are veterans in his cause, have no pre-eminence of exemption from suffering; on the contrary, our sufferings are uninterrupted and uncommonly severe, so that we have no consolation under incessant troubles of body and mind, but that of looking forward, with ardent expectation, to the glorious period when our

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<sup>1</sup> *The first fruits of the spirit:*] i. e. the apostles, and they to whom the spirit was communicated on the day of Pentecost. Or possibly, those believers who were favoured with the gifts of the holy spirit; which were the first fruits and the earnest of the promised inheritance, and which had not yet been communicated generally to the believers at Rome.

<sup>2</sup> *Even we.*] Dr. Taylor has offered some good reasons to prove, that St. Paul by this expression alludes to the apostles and the earliest converts to the Christian faith.

<sup>3</sup> *Of our body:*] i. e. our whole person. See ch. xii. I. Redemption, “*απολυτρωσις, est liberatio ab incommodo aliquo, hec incommodum τῶν σωματικῶν est ipsa ejus fragilitas. Ab hac fragilitate, corpus liberabitur non in morte, sed in resurrectione.*” 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c.” Rosenmuller. See 2 Cor. iv. 17, v. 1—4.

privilege as children of God, and our title to the heavenly inheritance, shall be fully acknowledged by our resurrection to immortal life and happiness. Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 23.

It is worthy of remark here, that the consolation of the apostle and of the primitive believers, was derived, not from the hope of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection, of which they appear to have entertained no expectation, but from the hope of a resurrection, which indeed they probably anticipated as very near at hand.

5. As hope was the first inducement to the profession of the Christian religion, so it ought to reconcile the true believer to patient expectation of its glorious object, ver. 24, 25.

*Moreover, we were saved<sup>4</sup> by this hope.*

24.

As a further consideration to reconcile our minds to a suffering state, I would observe that the gospel does not promise immediate possession of perfect happiness, it only excites a hope of a future resurrection to a glorious and immortal life; and it was this hope that induced you to renounce the error and idolatry of your heathen state.

*But hope that is attained<sup>5</sup> is no longer hope,*

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<sup>4</sup> *We were saved.*] *ερωτημεν.* Wakefield renders it, "we were saved under this hope." To be saved is to be rescued from our former state of bondage and to be introduced into the liberty of the Christian community. This hope is the hope of the "redemption of the body," a resurrection to an immortal life and happiness. This glorious hope was our inducement to embrace the Christian religion, and is our support under all our trials and persecutions.

<sup>5</sup> *Hope that is attained.*] Gr. "seen." See Wakefield.

Ch. VIII. *for what any one has attained, how can he yet hope*  
 Ver. 24. *for ?*

As the gospel only professes to excite hope, it would be unreasonable to be dissatisfied if this hope be not immediately fulfilled ; for the attainment of the object of hope would produce a total change in the state of the believer. Hope would then be converted into possession, and would cease to be, what it now is, the ruling principle of the Christian life.

25. *But if we hope for what we have not attained, then do we with patience*<sup>1</sup> *wait for it.*

If we entertain a reasonable hope of some future advantage, we make up our minds to wait till the proper season comes, and we are not childishly fretful and impatient if we are not put into possession before the regular and appointed time. So let us act in the Christian life, and, animated by a well-founded hope of joy unspeakable in a future state of existence, let us bear the evils of the present time with fortitude and resignation.

6. This spirit of patience and of hope qualifies the prayers of true believers in Christ, and renders them acceptable to God, ver. 26, 27.

26. *Furthermore*<sup>2</sup>, *this spirit also assists*<sup>3</sup> *our infir-*

<sup>1</sup> *Do we with patience wait.*] “*απεδεχόμεθα pro δεῖ ἀπεδεχέσθαι.*” Doederlein *apud* Rosenmuller. “let us wait with patience.” Wakefield ; who says, that this sense is favoured by the Arabic Version.

<sup>2</sup> *Furthermore.*] “*ὡσαύτως, præterea.*” Rosenmuller. Dr. Taylor says, “This word always in N.T., signifies in like manner, agreeably to what is mentioned just before.”



mities ; for we know not what to pray for as we ought<sup>4</sup> ; but this spirit itself intercedes for us with groans that are not expressed<sup>5</sup>. But he who searcheth the heart knoweth the mind of the spirit<sup>6</sup>, because it intercedes for the saints according to the will of God<sup>7</sup>.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 26.

27.

The spirit which the apostle here intends, is that which he had just described, the spirit of hope, of patience, and of resignation, which are the leading virtues of the Christian character.

By a figure, not unusual with the apostle, he personifies these virtues, and represents them as interceding with God in secret groans for those who are

<sup>3</sup> *Assists.*] συνασπλιμαζαντας, joins by taking up the burden at the other end : " Personificatur το πνευμα ut ἀμαρτια supra, c. vii. 17—20. Sensus est, ipse ille animus noster Christianus, quo Deum temeratur et amamus, nobis offert magnum fructum et solatium in calamitatibus." Rosenmüller. " The spirit lendeth us his helping hand." Doddridge.

<sup>4</sup> *We know not, &c.*] " Sæpe incidere casus ubi Christiani, rebus pressi adversis, nesciant quomodo voluntati Dei conformare debeant preces suas, an gratulationem miseriarum deprecari, an vero patienter ferre debeant, quæ sibi contingant voluntate Dei." Rosenmüller.

<sup>5</sup> *Groans that are not expressed.*] " Suspiriis tacitis, i. e. per breves mentis cogitationes, quæ dicimus, O Deus Pater, tibi permitto res meas," &c. Rosenmüller.

<sup>6</sup> *The mind of the spirit.*] φρονημα, the temper and disposition of mind. Comp. ver. 6. This expression is very intelligible if it refers to the inward feelings of the true believer ; but it is difficult to give it a proper sense if it applies to God himself, or to a subordinate spirit acting upon the human mind. " He knows, that is, he discerns and approves." Amos iii. 2 ; Ps. i. 6 ; Rom. xi. 2 ; 1 Pet. i. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *According to the will of God.*] " Nihil aliud expetimus a Deo, nisi quod sit iuxta Deum, congruat cum consilio Dei." Rosenmüller.

Ch. VIII. at a loss to know what to ask for themselves. Thus  
Ver. 27. the spirit is said to assist their infirmities.

Without the aid of this spirit, human nature would grow impatient under trials and sufferings, and would be importunate for relief. But hope and patience, the hope of the gospel, and that patient fortitude which is generated by Christian principles, restrain the temper, and though they cannot stupify the feelings, nor suppress the sigh, yet they humble the spirit in the presence of God, they restrain intemperate language, and they bow the mind into calm and quiet subjection to the divine visitations, and into a humble and dutiful acquiescence in the present state of suffering and trial, till the appointed season of deliverance comes.

And that great Being who is acquainted with the secrets of all hearts, sees all that passes in the mind of his suffering servants; he knows all their trials and how heavily they press upon them, and he sees and approves all their silent resignation and their patient hope: nor will he suffer this excellent spirit to go without its due reward.

For this spirit intercedes for his chosen and devoted servants agreeably to his own will; or, in other words, God is better pleased with this silent dutiful resignation to his will, and hope in his mercy, than he would be with the most clamorous importunity for relief.

This interpretation of the text appears to me to be by far the most just, spirited, and appropriate, and it solves every difficulty. The apostle could

not, by the spirit in this connexion, mean the gifts of the holy spirit, for of these the Roman Christians did not then generally participate; and it would be extremely difficult to make sense of the passage, if by the spirit we should understand, as most interpreters do<sup>1</sup>, a divine influence, or, that of any inferior agent upon the mind, to direct believers in their prayers. How can God, or any spirit subordinate to the Supreme, be said to make intercession for the saints with unutterable groans?

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 27.

7. The apostle adds, as a further topic of consolation, the assurance, that to true believers in Christ all things co-operate for good, ver. 28.

*And we know that all things co-operate for good to those who love God, to those who are invited according to his purpose.* 23.

Whatever sufferings and persecutions it may be our lot to endure, there is one consideration which may well allay all discontent and reconcile us to our condition. We are assured, beyond all reasonable

<sup>1</sup> *Most interpreters,*] even without excepting Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor. The interpretation which I have given is that of Rosenmuller, who refers to a German divine named Junckheim, in a work published A. D. 1775. Dr. Priestley also gives a similar interpretation: "By spirit in this place," says Dr. P. "is not to be understood the holy spirit, properly so called, or the power of working miracles, but that principle of a new life which the apostle supposes to be introduced by the gospel, in opposition to the flesh, or the principle by means of which men are subject to death and liable to condemnation. The workings of this spirit, or new principle, though we cannot always express them in words, the apostle says that God knows and approves; so that it may be considered as something within us that pleads with God for us."

Ch. VIII. doubt, that all the circumstances of our present  
Ver. 28. state of trial are ordered in wisdom and mercy; all shall contribute to prove, refine, and confirm the virtues of the Christian character, so that no suffering of any kind or degree shall be permitted which shall not be overruled to a greater good, provided that we persevere in our Christian profession, and having been invited into the Christian community by the free mercy of God, agreeably to his eternal plan of wisdom and benevolence, we manifest our sense of his distinguishing kindness by loving him with all our hearts and devoting our lives to his service.

8. The apostle having alluded to the eternal purpose of God in the gracious dispensation of the gospel, proceeds to state, that all his plan of mercy shall be carried into complete effect, and that all who are included in his wise and benevolent design, shall be justified in this life and shall be made happy for ever, ver. 29, 30.

29. *For those whom he foreknew he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren ;*  
30. *and whom he predestinated, those he hath also invited ; and whom he hath invited, those he hath also justified ; and whom he hath justified, those he hath also glorified.*

The eternal foreknowledge of God, and his free choice of the Hebrew nation to be his peculiar people, of his own good pleasure, independent of all

antecedent merit of their own, is a topic much insisted upon in the Old Testament; and, being familiar to the pious Jews, it is very naturally and frequently applied, by the writers of the New Testament, to the case of those who were invited and admitted into the Christian community; and Paul having been educated among the Pharisees, who were strict predestinarians appears to have retained a peculiar partiality to this doctrine, and frequently introduces it in a way which, though strictly true and perfectly consistent with the divine character, and with the most enlightened philosophy, is, nevertheless, by many, thought to be unguarded, and even dangerous to good morals. It has also excited, in the minds of some, a most unreasonable prejudice against the apostle's writings; while others have endeavoured to vindicate him, by interpreting his words in a sense which they will not bear.

The apostle however, in this instance, needs no apology. His assertions will be found to be strictly true; though they may perhaps require explanation, to guard against consequences to which possibly he did not advert.

*For those whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> "This," says Dr. Taylor, "is the foundation, and this is the finishing, of the wonderful scheme. The foundation is the free purpose of God's grace; the finishing is our conformity in glory to the Son of God." He agrees with Mr. Locke, that the apostle, in this passage and to the end of the chapter, has a principal view to the encouragement of the Gentile converts.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 29.

From the ages of eternity, when the whole plan of providence was present to the Divine mind, having decreed that at the destined period Jesus of Nazareth should appear in the world, as the deliverer of mankind from ignorance and idolatry, from vice and misery ; and that he should be raised from the dead, and put into possession of an everlasting inheritance, God at the same time foresaw, that it would be right that some should believe in him, should become his disciples, and participate in his reward: and upon this foresight he did from the beginning determine to introduce into existence a certain number of human beings, and to place them in those circumstances and to expose them to those influences which would produce the effect required, of forming them to a resemblance to Christ, both in his character and state.

*That he might be the first-born among many brethren*<sup>1</sup>.

Or, in other words, that he who was the first-born might not stand alone, or be one of a small number only ; but that many, a great multitude, yea eventually the whole human race, might attain the same character and the same happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> *That he might be the first-born, &c.*] The apostle here expresses his meaning indirectly. Believers are predestinated, not that Christ might be the first-born, for that he is by his resurrection from the dead, Col. i. 18 ; but that he, being the first-born, might have many brethren. A similar phraseology occurs, Gal. iii. 22 : " The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe : " where the apostle's meaning plainly is, that none but those who believe should be entitled to the promise.

*And whom he predestinated, them he also invited<sup>2</sup>.*

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 30.

All who are predestinated to salvation by Christ, either have been or in due time will be so invited to accept of the reasonable terms and the gracious offers of the gospel; they either have had or shall have such means of information of their understandings and conviction of their judgement, and shall have such motives applied to their affections and will, that they either have been, or will be, induced sincerely and practically to admit the truth of the gospel, to acknowledge Christ as their master, and to govern their conduct by the views and principles of the gospel.

*And whom he hath invited, them he hath also justified.*

All those who have been, or, who will be, induced to accept the invitation of the gospel, of whatever nation or profession, whether Jew or Gentile, will be admitted into the new covenant, they will be acknowledged as the reconciled and holy people of God, and will be entitled to all the privileges which were once peculiar to the Hebrew nation; and if they are practical believers they shall in due season be acknowledged as his children and be put into possession of the promised inheritance.

*And whom he hath justified, these he hath also glorified<sup>3</sup>.*

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<sup>2</sup> *Invited*] "called by his preachers; justified by admission into covenant with him; glorified intentionally." Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Glorified*.] "Thus," says Dr. Doddridge, "is a memorable

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 30.

They who in the eternal councils of the Almighty are foreknown as those who will accept the offers, and comply with the terms of the gospel, are by the eternal decree of God ordained to eternal life: it is determined that they shall enter into the joy of their Lord, and shall be with him where he is. And so certain is it that the purpose and the promise of God shall be fulfilled, that though ages of ages may possibly intervene, it may nevertheless be spoken of as already accomplished in the view of that all-comprehending Being to whom things which are not are as though they were, and in whose sight a thousand years are as one day.

Observe here, that the apostle speaks very familiarly of an event which exists only in the eternal immutable purpose of God as having actually taken place, even though it had not then, nor has yet come to pass. They who were foreknown, and predestinated, and invited, and justified, are also said to be glorified; that is, in the divine decree, which at the appointed time will assuredly be fulfilled: which to the all-comprehending mind of God appear as though they actually existed, in reference to which things that are not are spoken of as though they were.

Let it not then be said, that those Christians per-

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instance, and there are scores and perhaps hundreds more, in which things that shall certainly and speedily be done are spoken of as done already." See Improved Vers. *in loc.* whom he justified, them he also glorified: "viz. in his purpose." Locke. "and whom he hath justified, those he hath *in purpose* glorified also." Newcome.



vert the plain language of scripture, who understand our Lord's assertion of his existence before the time of Abraham, and of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, as an existence and a glory which he possessed only in the divine decree; for if it is quite necessary, in the case before us, to interpret the glorification of true believers as an event hitherto only existing in the divine mind, it is equally reasonable to explain the existence and glory attributed to Christ, as existing only in the divine decree. And it is only by a calm comparison of the language of scripture in different passages, and a familiar acquaintance with scripture phraseology, that the true meaning of the sacred writers can be satisfactorily elicited.

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 30.

The apostle suggests this gracious and immutable purpose of God for the salvation of true believers, as a consideration which might reconcile the minds of those who are thus predestinated, invited, and justified, to the difficulties and sufferings of an intermediate state of persecution and trial; and surely no topic could be better adapted to soothe and tranquillize the mind, and to reduce it to a complete acquiescence in the divine appointments.

9. The apostle concludes this portion of his discourse with expressing his admiration of the unspeakable goodness of God, in the gift of his son; and his cheerful conviction, that as nothing can alienate the love of God from the true believer, so that nothing shall alienate the heart of the believer

Ch. VIII. from the love of God, and Christ, and the gospel,  
Ver. 30. ver. 31—39.

[1.] Since God is their friend, and has given up his son for them, all things are theirs, ver. 31, 32.

31. *What then shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?*

And now, my brethren, what can I add to what I have already said, to assure you of your admission into the new covenant, and to reconcile you to the difficulties of a suffering state? If God be for us, as I have proved that he is; if he acknowledges us as his people and his children, as I have proved that he does; who is against us? who will dare to dispute our claim, or what apprehension need we entertain of danger, even from adversaries the most powerful and malignant? They can never invalidate our title to the love of God, nor hurt us while we are under the protection of omnipotence.

32. *He who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all<sup>1</sup>, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Why should we doubt the mercy of God? why should we hesitate at the accomplishment of his promises, however rich and wonderful? He has done that for us which we could least have expected: he has sent Jesus, the son of his love, the holiest and best of men, and the greatest of the pro-

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<sup>1</sup> For us all.] “Gentiles as well as Jews.” Locke, New-come.

phets, to proclaim the joyful tidings, to publish the new covenant, to invite all without distinction to come to him for rest; and more than this, he delivered him up to his enemies to put him to a public and ignominious death, to seal his doctrine with his blood, and to open the way to life: can you, after this, doubt whether God is sincere? will he not now fulfill all his promises, and exceed all your hopes?

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 32.

[2.] No charge can be made good against the chosen people of God, so as to put them out of the pale of his covenant, and to alienate his love from them, ver. 33, 34.

*Who shall accuse the chosen of God? Will God? he who justifieth them?*

33.

After this glorious display of the mercy of God to all who believe in Jesus, Gentiles as well as Jews, who will now say that they who are thus chosen to salvation shall be excluded from the holy community of the people of God, for not complying with the ceremonial law, or for any other supposed offence? Will God, who alone has a right to judge

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<sup>1</sup> *Will God, &c.*] "I here follow," says Dr. Doddridge, "the pointing proposed by the learned and ingenious Dr. Sam. Harris in his *Observations*, (p. 54, 55,) which greatly illustrates the spirit of this passage, and shows how justly that author adds, that it is remarkably in the grand manner of Demosthenes. "This," says Archbishop Newcome, "is the punctuation of Augustin, quoted by Lardner, *Cred.* part II. vol. i. 288; and of Locke." It is adopted by Newcome, by Griesbach, and many others. "Who shall be the prosecutor of those whom God hath chosen?" Locke.

Ch. VIII. in the case, impute this omission as a crime, and  
Ver. 33. cast them out of his covenant? What! God, the immutable Being! who first chose them for his people, and who now declares them to be justified in his sight by faith only, without the works of the law! What can be more absurd than such a supposition? And who shall dare to accuse, if God justifies and acquits?

34. *Who is he that condemneth? is it Christ? he who died? Yea, rather, who hath even been raised again? who is even at the right hand of God<sup>1</sup>? who is even interposing<sup>2</sup> for us?*

Who will presume to exclude those from the community of the people of God, whom God himself has chosen and justified? All judgement is committed to the Son. Will Christ condemn

<sup>1</sup> *Right hand of God.*] The place of dignity and authority. To suppose that a local situation is alluded to, which, however, it is too probable that many do contemplate, is gross anthropomorphism. "*Rex regum, dominus dominantium. Id enim per dexteram Dei significatur.*" Grotius; who refers to his note upon Matt. xx. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Interposing.*] "maketh intercession." Public Version. "intercedeth." Newcome; who observes, that "the word may be understood of intercessory prayer." "He manageth our concerns for us." Wakefield. "*Εντυγχάνω, proprie, adeo, convenio aliquem quacunq̄ue de causa, Act. xxvii. 24. (2) precibus aliquem adeo. εντ. υπερ τινος, sensu forensi, causam alicujus agere et commendare; simpliciter, intercedere pro aliquo, pro commodo alicujus facere aliquid, adjuvare, opem ferre. Rom. viii. 27, 34; Heb. vii. 25.*" Schleusner.

The word *intercede* is applied to Christ only twice in the New Testament: and it is so obvious that it properly signifies nothing more than to act for the advantage of another, that it is surprising to think how a doctrine so mysterious and unscriptural as the popular doctrine of Christ's intercession, could be erected upon so slender a foundation.

whom God accepts? What! Christ! he who died to reconcile sinners to God! yea, who was raised again to establish their justification, and to prove the validity of the new covenant? Yea, who ascended to heaven, and is now invested with authority over the church, and who is ever watchful over its interests, appointing and directing its ministers, and qualifying them for their work by the gifts of the holy spirit? And if Christ, the appointed judge, does not pass sentence upon those who are chosen and accepted through faith alone, shall any presume to wrest his authority out of his hand, and to condemn those whom God has chosen, and whom Christ acknowledges? for whom he died and rose again? and whom he has taken under his immediate care?

CH. VIII.  
VER. 34.

Being placed at the right hand of God is a phrase expressive of dignity and authority, and the word translated *intercede*, which is applied to our Lord in this passage, and in the epistle to the Hebrews (ch. vii. 25), expresses not merely praying for another, but any kind of interposition on his account. The apostle here seems to refer to that sensible authority which Christ exercised over the church in the apostolic age, and particularly to the communication of the holy spirit. These personal interpositions and communications of the spirit were withdrawn when the apostles closed their commission. But it by no means follows that our Lord is not personally present at all times with his church, superintending and managing its concerns, though

Ch. VIII. in an invisible and imperceptible manner, so as not  
 Ver. 34. to authorize personal addresses to him. And in this sense it may truly be said, that he ever lives to intercede for us; to interpose in the concerns of the church, and to promote its prosperity and success.

[3.] As nothing can alienate God from his chosen people, so the apostle expresses his confidence, that no difficulties, no persecutions, either present or to come, shall alienate their affections from God, and Christ, and the gospel, ver. 35—39.

35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

After all this rich display of divine mercy in choosing us, in saving us, in justifying us freely against every accuser, in placing us under the care and enrolling us in the community of Christ, our great leader and kind intercessor, who, or what, is there that can tempt us to apostatize from his service, and to forfeit our allegiance?

—35. Shall *tribulation*, or *imprisonment*<sup>1</sup>, or *persecution*<sup>2</sup>, or *hunger*, or *nakedness*, or *peril*, or *sword*?

36. (*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long*<sup>3</sup>: *we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*<sup>4</sup>.) *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.*

<sup>1</sup> *Imprisonment.*] στενοχωρία. Comp. 2 Cor. xii. 10. See Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Persecution.*] διωγμος. “wrongful usage.” Wakefield.

<sup>3</sup> *All the day long.*] “ἐλγν την ἡμεραν. Mortis periculo expositi sumus quotidie.” Rosenmuller. We are daily exposed to the danger of death.

<sup>4</sup> *Destined for the slaughter.*] See Doddridge.

As disciples of Christ, we are liable to troubles of every kind, we are exposed to imprisonment, to barbarous usage, to be deprived of food and clothing, to a variety of dangers, and to the sword of the executioner; so that the words of the Psalmist concerning his countrymen, Ps. xlv. 22, describing the cruelty of their enemies in their captivity, are literally applicable to the state of believers in Christ, that they are every moment exposed to a violent death like innocent and unresisting sheep who are reserved for the knife. But shall these dangers, shall these sufferings, shall death itself, whatever form of horror it may wear, tempt us to desert our Christian profession, and to forsake our beloved master? God forbid. Nay, so far are we from being intimidated by these terrors which set themselves in array against us, we even bid them a proud defiance; we trample them under our feet, we triumph over them all, in the name of our great Master, who loved us and who gave himself for us, who hath set us a glorious example of suffering virtue, and has infused into us those principles and that spirit which enable us to make light of every danger and of every suffering in his sacred cause.

*For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers<sup>5</sup>, nor*

Ch. VIII.  
Ver. 37.

38.

<sup>5</sup> *Not angels, &c.*] *οὐτε αγγέλων, &c.* Locke and many other commentators understand the latter words, principalities and powers, of the civil magistrate; but they seem puzzled how to interpret the word *angels*, which, however, they generally explain, of evil angels.—“Nor the temptations of the most powerful evil angels, if we were actually exposed to them.” Newcome.

Ch. VIII. *things present, nor things to come, nor height,*  
 Ver. 39. *nor depth, nor any other creature*<sup>1</sup>, *shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I am justified in using this triumphant language, because I feel a firm and a joyful confidence, that there is nothing formidable in death, and nothing alluring in life; that there is nothing which the ecclesiastical or the civil power can say or do, to intimidate or to persuade; that there is nothing which we are now suffering or can hereafter suffer; that there is no extreme of any kind, whether of prosperity or adversity; in short, that there is no imaginable consideration which now can, or ever will be able to influence us to abandon our Christian profession, or to forego those exalted privileges, those precious promises, and those glorious hopes, of which we are now in possession, through the infinite mercy of God revealed by our blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ, whose disciples it is our glory to profess ourselves, and whose authority we never will renounce.

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Perhaps the apostle means nothing more than the civil and ecclesiastical powers. The same expression seems to be applied, 1 Pet. iii. 22, to denote the Jewish hierarchy. In a similar sense similar expressions appear to be used by the apostle, Eph. i. 20, 21, vi. 12; see Locke's Notes, Col. ii. 15. In the Apocalypsc, the angels of the seven churches are commonly understood to be the ministers of the churches; and in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *angels* probably signify former prophets and messengers of God. See Wakefield and the Improved Version in *loc*.

<sup>1</sup> *Creature*.] “*κτίσις*, any other matter.” Newcome.—“*Nec res ulla alia*.” Grotius.



In this eloquent paragraph it is obvious to remark, how plainly the apostle warns the Christian converts of the dangers and sufferings to which they exposed themselves by the profession of the Christian faith. It was no trifling concern for a person to avow himself a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. He must be prepared to make great sacrifices, to endure great hardships, and to expose even life itself to the utmost hazard: and yet converts increased every day. How convincing must have been that evidence which could overpower the most inveterate prejudices, and induce men to embrace the Christian doctrine in circumstances so unfavourable!

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Ver. 39.

We may further remark, that those greatly mistake the sense of the apostle who deduce from his words what is commonly called the doctrine of perseverance; by which they mean, that if a person has once been sincerely virtuous, he will never finally apostatize and perish. This is a very dangerous tenet, contrary both to daily sad experience and to the plainest declarations of scripture. The apostle does indeed express his joyful confidence, that he and his fellow-christians at Rome should never be either seduced or terrified into apostasy from Christ. But this is a very different case from the doctrine I am now stating, which probably never entered into the apostle's mind.

I shall close this portion of the epistle with the judicious and forcible remarks of Dr. Taylor:

“The conclusion of this chapter,” says he, “is

Ch. VIII. the most elegant and sublime piece of writing I  
Ver. 39. remember ever to have read. It is founded on the grand and solid principles of the gospel. It breathes the true spirit of Christian magnanimity; raises our minds far above all things created, and shows in a bright and heavenly view the greatness of soul, and the strong consolation which the gospel inspires. God grant it may stand clear before our understandings, and be transcribed into all our hearts! They who despise the gospel, despise all that is great and glorious and happy."

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## PART THE FOURTH.

THE APOSTLE TREATS OF THE PRESENT REJECTION OF THE JEWS; OF THE INVITATION AND ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH; AND OF THE ULTIMATE RESTORATION OF GOD'S ANCIENT PEOPLE. Ch. ix—xi.

### SECTION I.

Ch. IX. *The apostle announces and vindicates the present rejection of the Jews, and the invitation and admission of believing Gentiles to the character and privileges of the people of God.* Ch. ix. x.

#### I.

The apostle, with great delicacy and great reluctance, but with great seriousness and solemnity,

announces the present rejection of his countrymen CH. IX.  
from their state of covenant with God, ch. ix.  
1—5.

*I declare the truth in Christ<sup>1</sup>: I do not speak* Ver. 1.  
*falsely, my conscience bearing testimony with me*  
*that it is in the holy spirit<sup>1</sup>.*

As the apostle of the Gentiles, I now announce a melancholy truth, which I have in charge from Christ: I solemnly assure you it is no forgery of mine; my conscience bears its testimony, that the awful purpose has been revealed to me by the holy spirit.

*That I have great grief and incessant pain in* 2.  
*my heart, (for I myself once gloried in being an* 3.  
*alien from Christ<sup>2</sup>;) on account of my brethren,*  
*my kinsmen according to the flesh.*

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<sup>1</sup> "In Christ," "in the holy spirit:"] i. e. by authority from Christ—revealed by the spirit, "as a disciple of Christ—as one enlightened by the holy spirit." Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> For I myself, &c.] "for I also was once an alien from Christ." Wakefield; to whom we are indebted for the elucidation of this difficult passage, which most, if not all the critics who preceded him seem to have totally misunderstood. He illustrates the phrase by the *Εχθρὸς εἶμι* of Homer, "I profess myself to be:" and justly adds, "this solution makes the passage rational and plain."

*Ὅς τοι πολλὰς ἀγίας ἐν σφαιρῇ εὐχέται εἶμι.*

ILIAD. A. v. 91. 73.

Achilles here contemptuously represents Agamemnon as boasting of his superiority to the other chiefs: so the apostle not only *was* an alien from Christ, but he *gloried* in his enmity to him, and in being a savage persecutor of his disciples. It is this circumstance that he now reflects upon with deep regret; and laments that so many of his beloved countrymen are actuated by the same spirit. Archbishop Newcome renders the clause, "I could wish that I myself were accursed by Christ." Dodd-

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 3.

I am indeed unwilling to name it; for my heart is filled with anguish at the recollection which continually haunts me, which indeed is never absent from my thoughts: namely, that the great mass of my countrymen, my brethren of the Jewish nation, are now, what I once madly boasted myself to be, aliens from Christ and his doctrine, haters of his name; and thus excluded from all the benefits of the new covenant. Such is indeed their miserable state.

The delicacy of the apostle's address upon this occasion is very striking. He begins with the solemn annunciation of a message from God. And what does he announce? Apparently nothing more than this: That he having once been an enemy to the gospel and excluded from its benefits, is now full of trouble and anguish on account of his countrymen; and there he stops, leaving it to the reader to judge what was the cause of the distress which he then felt, and which it was too painful for him to name explicitly.

The apostle calls the Jews his kinsmen "accord-

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ridge, after Waterland, renders it, "after the example of Christ," 2 Tim. i. 3: both very far from the simplicity and pertinence of Wakefield, whose interpretation appears to be confirmed by a similar phraseology, Gal. iv. 12, which in the common version stands "be as I *am*, for I *am* as ye *are*;" which hardly makes sense. "Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, ὅτι καὶ ἔγω ὡς ὑμεῖς" "Be as I *now* am, for I *once* was as you *now* are;" that is, alienated from Christ and his doctrine, and attached to the rites and ceremonies of the law. I have long seen my error, and felt the benefit of the change: may you see yours, and act and profit as I have done.

ing to the flesh;" by which every reader understands, his natural relations: nor does any one imagine that he has any secret reference to supernatural kindred. Let this be remembered, when the same language is applied to Christ.

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Ver. 3.

The apostle now proceeds to enumerate the privileges of God's ancient people, the original possession of which greatly aggravates the disgrace and misery of their present rejection.

*Who are Israelites*<sup>1</sup>. Who have the honour of being descended from him who was chosen before he was born, to be the heir of the promise; and to whom a name was given as a pledge of the divine favour.

4.

*Whose is the adoption*. Who are called sons of God; being as it were new born, by their deliverance from the servitude of Egypt, and their inheritance of the land of Canaan, which God had promised to their forefathers. Hos. xi. 1.

*And the glory*. Who were honoured with a visible symbol of the divine presence; first, in the pillar of cloud and fire which directed their march

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<sup>1</sup> *Who are Israelites*.] "who are the descendants of Israel, the adopted sons of God, Exod. iv. 22, 23; among whom God displayed the glorious symbol of his presence; with whom he entered into covenant by Abraham and Moses, see Eph. ii. 12; to whom he gave the law of the two tables, and afterward the ceremonial ordinances; to whom illustrious promises were made by their forefathers and by the prophets; whose ancestors were the patriarchs: and of whom, as to his human lineage, Christ descended, who is over all, Eph. i. 22, 23; Phil. ii. 9; Matt. xxviii. 18. God, Matt. i. 23; Heb. i. 8; John i. 1. blessed for ever, Rev. v. 12, 13." Newcome.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 4.

through the wilderness; and afterwards in the Shechinah or cloud of glory, which rested upon the mercy seat.

*And the covenants.* To whom belonged the two tablets of stone on which the ten commandments were engraven by the finger of God himself, which were the terms of the covenant which God condescended to establish between himself and the Jewish people: and to which, if they had faithfully adhered, they would never have been rejected.

*And the giving out of the law:* in a solemn and public manner, from Mount Sinai.

*And the religious service.* A ritual of worship instituted by God himself; and adopted, first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple.

*And the promises.* The promise of the possession of the land of Canaan and of being supported there; also, of triumphing over all their enemies, as long as they continued faithful to the covenant: and finally, the promise of the Messiah, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and under whose reign righteousness and peace should be established, universally, and for ever.

5. *Whose are the fathers.* Who have the honour of being descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: a family who were selected by the wisdom of God from the rest of the world, and to whose posterity the covenant was limited.

*Of whom is Christ according to the flesh.* Who may boast of Christ himself as their countryman and kinsman; descended from the same distin-

guished ancestors, and subject to the same laws, to the same dispensation of rites and ceremonies. It may here be important to remark, that the phrase "according to the flesh," as applied to Christ, no more indicates a superior extraction, different from that of the flesh, than it does when applied (ver. 3) to the apostle Paul. It is a mere Jewish idiom, expressing natural consanguinity.

*Whose is the God over all, blessed for ever—*

[*Whose is the God, &c.*] *ὅς ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ πάντων.* This most probably is the true reading, agreeably to the judicious conjecture of Slichtingius, Whitby, and Taylor, though it is not authorized by any manuscript, version, or ecclesiastical authority: but the connexion seems to require it. It is next to impossible that the apostle, when enumerating the distinguishing privileges of his countrymen, should omit the greatest privilege of all; namely, that God was in a peculiar sense their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This he has before mentioned, as the boast of the Jews, ch. ii. 17; and as the chief glory of believers in Christ, who succeed to the privileges of God's ancient people, Rom. v. 11; and he could not avoid repeating it here. And the verbal misplacing of *ὅς ὁ θεὸς* for *ὁ θεὸς ὅς* is so very inconsiderable, that it might easily escape the pen of some early transcriber: perhaps of the apostle's own amanuensis.—A similar construction, suggested by a learned friend, occurs in Callimachus:

*ὅς ὁ θεὸς πάλαιος χρόνος*  
*ἄστις, ὃν οὔτις γὰρ γαίματος, ὃν ἰδὼς ἀρχαίς,*  
*ὃν εἰσεῖς, ὃν πάντα.*

*Τρο. εὐς ΔΙΑ, 73.*

If the common reading should be preferred, the proper translation would be that of Erasmus, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Locke, Mr. Lindsey, and many others, viz. *who is over all, God be blessed for evermore*; or, *God who is over all be blessed for evermore*.—Mr. Lindsey says, (Sequel, p. 204,) that this clause "was read so as not to appear to belong to Christ, at least for the first three centuries. Origen calls it rashness to suppose that Christ is God over all." See also Clarke on the Trin. No. 539, and

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 5.

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Ver. 5.

*more. Amen.* And to crown the catalogue of Jewish privileges, they have a right to boast in that God who is the Lord of universal nature, the ruler of all the nations of the earth, unchangeably glorious and happy, as in a peculiar sense their Father and their God: who owned the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as his first-born among the families of the earth, and who provided for them a distinguished inheritance among the nations.

Thus the apostle expresses his extreme regret that a nation, to which he was so closely allied, which was naturally so dear to him, and which had been so pre-eminently distinguished by its sacred privileges from all other nations, should now be rejected because of its unbelief.

## II.

The apostle states and replies to certain objections which are opposed to the doctrine which he here announces concerning the rejection of God's ancient people, ver. 6—24.

Obj. 1. This dispensation is no violation of the divine promise, ver. 6—13.

*Not that by any means the word of God has ailed.*

It may perhaps be objected, that God cannot cast the Jewish nation out of his covenant; for this would direct breach of his promise, which is impossible.

[1.] The apostle replies to this by stating, that



the promise was originally limited to a select number, and was not applicable to all who might claim the benefit of it, whether they complied with the conditions or not.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 6.

*For all the posterity of Israel are not the true Israel*<sup>1</sup>.

It is perfectly analogous to the manifestations of the divine mercy in the Old Testament, that when a promise is made in general terms, it is to be understood with reasonable limitations. Upon this principle the promises made indefinitely to the descendants of Jacob, are to be understood as limited to those only who, meeting the conditions of the covenant, were thereby proved to be Israelites in purview of the promise; which many of Jacob's natural descendants are not.

[2.] The apostle further illustrates the limitation of the divine promise by the entail of it upon the descendants of Abraham by Sarah, to the exclusion of all the rest, ver. 7—9.

*Nor, because they are the posterity of Abraham, are they all his children; but, the posterity of Isaac*

7.

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<sup>1</sup> *For all the posterity, &c.*] Dr. Taylor, with Mr. Locke, interprets this passage, *q. d.* "the whole body of natural-born Jews are not the whole of the Israel of God;" implying that the Gentiles also were included in the promise made to Abraham. But I cannot think that the apostle's words will bear the sense put upon them by these able expositors. The common interpretation appears to me unquestionably the true one: *q. d.* the promise is not so universal as to extend to all natural-born Israelites, without exception.

Ch. IX. only *shall be called thine*<sup>1</sup>. *That is, the natural*  
Ver. 8. *descendants are not the children of God*<sup>2</sup>; *but the*  
*children of the promise only are accounted the true*  
*offspring.*

Abraham had children by Hagar and Keturah as well as by Sarah, and he was anxious for their welfare; but he could not prevail to have their names enrolled in the covenant. The answer of God to the patriarch's importunity was a peremptory declaration, that the promise should be limited to the posterity of Isaac, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. This shows, that though the promise was made indefinitely to Abraham's descendants, it was in fact limited to the line of Isaac. And the promise to Jacob and his descendants must be understood with similar limitations.

9. *For this is the word of promise, At this very time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.*

I have heard thee, saith the oracle, Gen. xvii. 20, for Ishmael, and I will make him a great nation; but my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

[3.] The apostle further illustrates the conduct of Divine Providence, in limiting the application of an indefinite promise, by the case of Jacob and

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<sup>1</sup> *The posterity, &c.]* Gr. "through Isaac thine offspring shall be called." Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *The natural descendants, &c.]* Gr. "they that are the children of the flesh." Newcome.

Esau : the preference of Jacob being declared before the twins were born, ver. 10—13. Ch. IX.

*And not only this, but Rebecca also having conceived by one person, namely, our father Isaac, exhibits a similar example*<sup>3</sup>. Ver. 10.

Isaac is not the only instance of a special limitation to an indefinite promise ; for though the covenant was established with Isaac and his descendants, it did not extend to both his children, but was limited to one only, who was chosen by the free mercy of God. And Rebecca, who had conceived twins by Isaac, was favoured with a memorable oracle which establishes this important fact.

*For before their birth, when the children had done neither good nor evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not according to works, but to the will of him who inviteth, it was said unto her, that the elder shall serve the younger : as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* 11.  
12.  
13.

When Rebecca, in her state of pregnancy, being alarmed with respect to the event, expressed her

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<sup>3</sup> *Exhibits a similar example.*] The sense is defective, and requires to be filled up. Archbishop Newcome supplies it in this manner : " but Rebecca also had the word of promise," &c. The former seems more intelligible, it being the design of the apostle to show that an indefinite promise is not to be understood in an absolute sense. The promise was made to the posterity of Abraham, but it was limited to his posterity by Isaac ; and here again the promise is made to the children of Isaac, but it is limited to the descendants of Jacob. So the promise is made to the children of Israel, but it is limited to those who are the true Israel.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 13.

feelings and her fears in the presence of God, the oracle vouchsafed a gracious answer, Gen. xxv. 22, 23. It was announced to her that she was about to be the mother of two children, each of whom would be the founder of a great nation; but that the younger would be the most powerful, and that he would in fact be the inheritor of the promise, and that the descendants of the elder brother should be in subjection to those of the younger. Now observe, this arrangement was made before they were born, and before it was possible that either of them should be capable either of right or wrong, and consequently the designation of the younger was not the reward of merit, nor the rejection of the elder the consequence of demerit; but all depended upon the sovereign will of God, who, for wise but unknown reasons, invited the one and rejected the other. And in this sense we are to understand the declaration of God by the prophet Malachi (ch. i. 2.), “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” Not that God is capable of loving or hating any of his rational offspring without reason; but *q. d.* Without any regard to their character and merit I have, for reasons not divulged to mankind, appointed the posterity of Jacob to the possession of privileges which are not granted to the descendants of Esau<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Upon this passage it is obvious to remark, that the words *love* and *hatred* do not in this connexion express affections of the mind, (for what indeed can be more absurd than to attribute human passions to a Being of unchangeable benevolence?)

**Obj. 2.** The present rejection of the Jewish nation is not an act of injustice, upon Ch. IX.

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but simply the purpose of the divine Being to place one of the persons alluded to in favourable and the other in unfavourable circumstances ; to select one as the heir of the promises in preference to the other, and that antecedently to any personal merit or demerit on their part : and it is also evident that the posterity, and not the persons of the individuals named, were the objects of the prophecy, and that the distinction between them relates, not to their condition as individuals, but to their national privileges.

Hence we may take occasion to observe, that the scriptures ought to be read with due consideration and reflection ; that much of its language is to be understood in a qualified sense ; and particularly that where human passions, such as love, hatred, indignation, and the like, are ascribed to God, these expressions are never to be understood literally, but that they refer solely to dispensations of natural good or evil, with which individuals may be respectively visited, but which all flow equally from infinite benevolence under the direction of infinite wisdom.

Also, though the reason of the appointment of some to advantages and privileges which are denied to others may often not be discoverable by human sagacity, we are not for that reason to suppose that the great common Parent of mankind acts arbitrarily and from caprice ; for infinite wisdom always governs its choice by the best motives, though they may be imperceptible or incomprehensible by the human intellect. It is also obvious, though it is not the immediate subject of the apostle's discourse, that the same principles must and do apply to individuals as to communities. The Maker of all things appoints to every human being the circumstances of his birth, his talents, his constitution, his connexion, his education, his early impressions, his moral principles, the result of which is his moral and social habits, his character, his success in life, and his ultimate condition and state. God is the cause of all causes, all things come to pass according to his purpose, and, whatever inequalities may appear in his conduct to individuals, no one shall ever have reason eventually to complain of injustice ; and in the grand result, all his creatures shall have reason to be thankful for their existence, and be willing to take such as the kind image

Ch. IX. the principles of the Jewish scriptures, ver. 14—18.

The apostle first states the objection, ver. 14.

Ver. 14. *What shall we say then ? is not God unjust ? Far from it.*

‘ We allow that an indefinite promise is not always to be taken in its most extensive sense ; but is it not injustice in God from a number of equally unoffending individuals to select some for evil, and others for good ? to appoint our ancestors to participate in his covenant, and so to order our circumstances that we should be rejected ? ’ The apostle meets this supposed objection with a direct negative, and proceeds to suggest those considerations which he regarded as a satisfactory reply, and which to the Jews must necessarily have appeared conclusive, because they consist of cases in point taken from their own scriptures : *q. d.* God has actually pursued the conduct to which you object, and has claimed a right to act in this sovereign and arbitrary manner with his creatures, and therefore you cannot dispute it.

[1.] God, in his reply to Moses, expressly challenges the right to dispose of his favours as he pleases, ver. 15, 16.

15. *For he saith to Moses, I will show mercy on whom I please to show mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I please to have compassion.*

When that highly favoured servant of God was desirous to see the divine glory, probably alluding

to some glorious vision which he supposed to be contained within the pillar of cloud from which the oracle was delivered with an audible voice, the Divine Being, in his reply, Exod. xxxiii. 19, condescendingly intimates that his essence was invisible, and that nothing of his nature could be understood by man but his benevolence. I will cause all my goodness, says he, to pass before thee; and even this attribute he exercises in a way beyond the comprehension of man, and which must often appear arbitrary and capricious. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And from hence the apostle argues, that if he chose to reject the present Jews, though he had chosen their ancestors, he was only exercising a prerogative which he claimed as his right.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 15.

*So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy.*

16.

Upon this principle, Jacob and his posterity were selected to inherit the promise, very much against the inclination of Isaac and the exertions of Esau. Esau was the elder son and the father's favourite, who designed the blessing for him, and sent him out to prepare the venison, that he might eat and pronounce the blessing: in the mean time Jacob came in, and surreptitiously obtained it; so that Isaac's purpose and Esau's dutiful labours were defeated by the fraudulent act of Jacob, and the blessing was entailed upon him; not indeed as the reward of a lying fraud upon his aged father, which

Ch. IX. deserved severe reprehension, but because God, for  
Ver. 16. wise and good reasons, had determined before he  
was born that the promise should, independently  
upon Jacob's character, be entailed upon his fami-  
ly ; and he has a right freely to withdraw, what he  
thus freely, and independently of all antecedent ine-  
rit, gave. See Gen. xxvii., to which the apostle  
alludes.

[2.] God has exercised the same sovereign right  
in the case of Pharaoh, ver. 17, 18.

17. *Moreover<sup>1</sup>, the scripture saith to Pharaoh, For  
this very purpose have I raised thee up<sup>2</sup>, that I  
may show forth my power in thee, and that my  
name may be celebrated through all the earth.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Moreover.*] γαρ. This particle is here used as introducing  
a collateral argument, not as alleging a reason for an antecede-  
nt assertion.

<sup>2</sup> *Have I raised thee up.*] "I have restored thee to health  
and preserved thee alive," &c. Taylor ; who with Whitby,  
Ainsworth, and others, translates Exod. ix. 15, "For now I  
stretched out my hand and I had smitten thee and thy people  
with pestilence, and thou hadst been cut off from the earth, but  
in very deed, &c." Dr. Whitby adds, "hence we learn how  
alien from the truth and from the import of the words is that  
exposition which saith, For this cause have I created thee, or  
raised thee to be the king of Ægypt." But if it was consis-  
tent with the Divine character to restore Pharaoh to health and  
to preserve his life, in order to place him in a situation in  
which his obdurate guilt would magnify the Divine power and  
justice in delivering the Israelites, and in the punishment of  
Pharaoh and the Egyptians, it would have been equally con-  
sistent with the justice and benevolence of God, as no doubt in  
fact it was, to give him life at first, and to place him in circum-  
stances in which this was the foreseen and intended result. The  
difficulty, whatever it be, is not to be got rid of merely by  
removing it a little further off.



The case of Pharaoh is another example of a public person who, by the sovereign pleasure of God for reasons not communicated to man, was placed in circumstances of great moral disadvantage. For of him it is recorded, Exod. ix. 15, 16, that Moses declared to him, in the name and by the authority of God, that he had restored him from the plague with which he had been smitten, and had raised him up from the bed of sickness, for the express purpose of exhibiting him to the world as an awful monument of divine power and justice; to show to what degree of depravity the repetition of crime might debase the mind; and likewise to warn presumptuous sinners, that guilt, however hardened by practice or protected by power, was never beyond the arm of divine justice, which at the appointed time would never fail to seize its victim, and to visit the obdurate offender with punishment proportioned to his crimes.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 17.

*So then with whom he pleases he deals mercifully, and whom he pleases he treats harshly*<sup>3</sup>.

18.

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<sup>3</sup> *He treats harshly.*] I have adopted the interpretation of Rosenmüller: "*Ergo pro suo arbitrio hunc benigne, illum, minus benigne, vel duriter tractat.*" This sense best keeps up the opposition in the two clauses of the sentence, and seems best to support the apostle's conclusion. Most interpreters, however, adopt the common translation, "whom he will he hardeneth," referring to Exod. x. 27., xi. 10, and other texts, in which God is said to harden Pharaoh's heart. And the latter interpretation seems to lay a better foundation for the following objection, Why doth he yet find fault? This passage has given rise to the inextricable controversy among theologians, whether, and in what sense, God is the author of moral evil. In no sense, however, can it be admitted that God is the approver

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 18.

Thus it appears that the sovereign ruler of the world not only claims a right to place his creatures in circumstances more or less advantageous, as he pleases, but that he has actually exercised this right in various instances, which those who profess to receive the Mosaic writings as of divine authority can neither deny nor impeach. And if he had a right to select Isaac and reject Ishmael, to choose Jacob and abandon Esau, to save the Hebrew nation by Moses, and to punish and destroy Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who shall deny that in these times he has an equal right to admit into his covenant the believing Gentiles, and to reject the unbelieving Jews?

Obj. 3. The apostle, upon general principles, vindicates the character of God as a righteous governor in the rejection of the Jews, ver. 19—24.

19. *Thou wilt then say to me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will<sup>1</sup>?*

of evil; though it cannot be denied, except by those who deny the foreknowledge of God, that he often places his creatures in those circumstances, the certain and foreseen result of which will be the production of a great mass of guilt and misery.

<sup>1</sup> *Why doth he yet find fault? &c.*] If the common interpretation of ver. 18 be adopted, "whom he will he hardeneth," the objection, "Why doth he yet find fault?" is very natural, and can never be satisfactorily answered by those who maintain the doctrine of absolute and arbitrary decrees. Nor is the answer of the apostle, as commonly understood, much to the purpose; for, instead of vindicating the justice of God, it only appeals to his power, and silences the objection by urging, that it is useless for a creature to complain.

But if the apostle's assertion is that God, at his good pleasure, places some of his creatures in circumstances of moral

Possibly some Jewish reader, not immediately discerning the scope of the argument, may be ready to say, Well, and what is all this to us, and how are we to blame? did any one ever object to the right which God exercised of selecting the Hebrew nation as his peculiar people, and of rejecting Esau and punishing Pharaoh?

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 19.

The apostle silences the objector by reminding him, that the same principles which apply to the conduct of Divine Providence towards the heathen nations, are equally applicable to the case of the Jews.

[1.] He reminds the objector, that the sovereign

and political advantage, and others in circumstances of corresponding disadvantage; and if he illustrates this conclusion to the satisfaction of the Jew by the examples of Ishmael and Isaac, of Esau and Jacob, the objection then stands thus: Be it so; Isaac and Jacob, and their posterity, are selected and preferred; Ishmael, Esau, and Pharaoh, are rejected and cast away; all has taken place according to the divine decree. Nobody resists, nobody complains; why then is God dissatisfied? why does he will to introduce a change, to choose the Gentile, to reject the Jew?

To this question the apostle's answer is full in point, and completely satisfactory. He first shows, ver. 20, 21, that God has the same right to dispose of one class or nation that he has of another, and that none of his creatures have a right to complain of their situation because of the inferiority of their advantages. And secondly, he argues, ver. 22—24, that no one could charge God with injustice if he deprived a nation of privileges which they had long neglected and abused, and imparted them to the Gentiles, who were prepared to receive and to improve them well.

Thus the apostle's reasoning is perfectly conclusive; and this circumstance is highly favourable to the interpretation which Rosenmüller gives of the 18th verse, which is different from that of all other expositors which I have seen.

Ch. IX. Lord and proprietor of all has an undoubted right  
Ver. 19. to place his creatures in whatever circumstances he pleases, ver. 20, 21.

- 20 *Nay but, O man, who art thou that disputest with God? shall the work say to the workman,*  
21. *Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, out of the same mass to form one vessel for an honourable and another for a dishonourable use?*

*q. d.* You are very well content with the rejection of Esau and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host; but you do not like that the Jews, in similar circumstances, should be treated in a similar manner. But why not? What claim has a Jew upon his Maker above a heathen, to entitle him to a preference? Shall a vessel say to its former, Why was not I cast in a better mould, or made applicable to a more useful or ornamental purpose? May a potter from the same mass of clay form vessels for very different purposes, each useful in its place; and shall we deny to God the same sovereign authority over all his works; the right to place some of his creatures in circumstances of great natural and moral advantage, and others of corresponding disadvantage; and again, if he pleases, to reverse their condition, to depress those who were uppermost, and to raise those who were depressed? and shall any in these circumstances presume to charge their Maker with injustice?

[2.] To bring the matter home, the apostle chal-

lenges the objector to say why the Jew, who has abused his privileges, should not be cast off, and the Gentile, who is willing to accept of mercy, should not be received, ver. 22—24.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 21.

*What if God bore with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, resolving to manifest his wrath and to make known his power<sup>1</sup> ?*

22.

Suppose a nation highly distinguished by its privileges: suppose this nation to have abused its privileges, to have rebelled against its God, to have disobeyed his authority, and to have persecuted his prophets and messengers; suppose that God in his mercy bore long with these provocations, and used various means to reclaim a disobedient people, which notwithstanding all the means of recovery hardened itself still more in wickedness, rendering themselves the worthy objects of divine indignation and becoming ripe for destruction; and supposing that after all this forbearance God should at last resolve to manifest his displeasure, to reject them from his favour, and to make an awful display of his power and justice in the ruin and condemnation of a guilty nation, who shall in this case presume to arraign the wisdom and equity of the divine government, and to charge God with injustice?

*And resolving likewise to make known the riches of his glory towards the vessels of mercy which he has before prepared for glory, even towards us*

23.

24.

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<sup>1</sup> The apostle's extreme reluctance to express in plain terms the rejection of the Jews, renders his language obscure, though his meaning is sufficiently evident.

Ch. IX. *whom he has invited, not only from among the*  
 Ver. 24. *Jews, but from among the Gentiles also.*

And suppose further, that God being resolved to exhibit examples of mercy as well as of justice, and particularly to manifest the glorious riches of his gospel to those whom he has selected as vessels of mercy, and who, having been placed in situations in which they were taught the necessity and importance of heavenly aid, were prepared for accepting the offers of the gospel; and suppose that agreeably to this benevolent purpose, he by his appointed messenger invited all persons of all nations to accept these inestimable blessings, and that he receives into covenant all who believe in the mission of Jesus Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, and rejects all who decline to accept the gracious proposals of the gospel; who will presume to arraign the wisdom and equity of the divine government in such a case as this, or to say that God is either unwise or unjust?

### III.

The rejection of the Jewish nation in general, the admission of the Gentiles to a state of privilege, and the reasons of this dispensation, are distinctly marked by the prophets Hosea and Isaiah, ch. ix. 25—33.

1. The fact is stated by the prophet Hosea, ver. 25, 26.

25. *As he also saith in Hosea, I will call those who*

*were not my people, my people; and her who was not beloved, beloved.* Ch. IX. Ver. 26.

IN HOS. ii. 23, it is written, "I will sow her unto me in the land; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, *Thou art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God." It is plain from these words, that a people who had been rejected by God were to be admitted into his covenant; and this is applicable to the Gentile world, as well as to the Jews when restored after a state of rejection.

*And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called sons of the living God.* 26.

Again, it is written Hosea i. 10, after God had threatened to reject the Israelites, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people, there it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God<sup>1</sup>." In both these passages it is evident

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<sup>1</sup> It is so plain from the context of the passages cited from Hosea, that the prediction refers to the restoration of the rejected Israelites, that I can by no means accede to the interpretation of Dr. Taylor, that the object of the prophecy is the substitution of the Gentiles in the place of the rejected Jews. Archbishop Newcome explains the prophecy of the restoration from the Babylonian captivity; but I incline to the opinion of those expositors who interpret the glowing language of the prophet as applicable to an event not yet accomplished. See Newcome's Translation of Hosea.

Ch. IX. from the context, that the prophet foretells the re-  
Ver. 26. storation and prosperity of Israel after a previous rejection, amounting almost to extermination ; and in this view they might be properly cited by the apostle, in his delicate and covert manner, as including a previous rejection, which was the unpalatable doctrine he had immediately in view, under the pleasing anticipation of an ultimate glorious restoration.

Nevertheless, as the apostle introduces the succeeding quotations from Isaiah, as particularly applicable to the Jews, he plainly intimates that those from Hosea are applicable to the state of the Gentiles ; and if so, he quotes them in the manner in which the scriptures appear to have been usually cited by the Jews of that age by way of accommodation, not as expressing the original meaning of the prophet, but as language which was applicable to the doctrine which he meant to express. How far the apostle might himself be disposed to lean upon arguments of this nature, it may be difficult to ascertain, nor is it of much consequence ; it is sufficient that his doctrine is true, though his reasoning may not always be conclusive.

2. The rejection of the Jews is an event explicitly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, ver. 27—29.

27. *But Isaiah crieth out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of*  
28. *the sea, the remnant only shall be saved. For he*



*will accomplish<sup>1</sup> and speedily finish his righteous account; surely the Lord will make a short reckoning upon the land.*

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 28.

This quotation is made from Isa. x. 22, 23, and the apostle quotes literally from the LXX., or Greek translation of the Old Testament, which does not exactly agree with the Hebrew. The prophecy was written soon after the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians, and Judah is threatened with a similar doom; it is foretold that the invasion should be speedy and exterminating, so that a small remnant only should escape and be restored. This prophecy the apostle cites as descriptive of the present state of the Jews, who, like their apostate ancestors, were now, with the exception of a small remnant, rejected from the covenant of God.

*And as Isaiah had foretold, Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*

29.

This passage is taken from Isaiah i. 9, in which the prophet describes some desolating judgements which threatened to lay waste the whole Jewish nation, had not God mercifully reserved a small rem-

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<sup>1</sup> *He will accomplish, &c.]* “λογον, κ. τ. λ. perficiet enim et subito absolvet rem pro veracitate sua.” Rosenmuller. “συντελειν λογον, rem perficere. συντεμνειν, breviter absolvere: de causis forensibus quæ celeriter absoluntur.” Idem. “ὅτι λογον, κ. τ. λ. rem sic decretam exsequetur Dominus in terra, ὅτι redundet, vel vertendum, utique, profecto.” Idem.

The Alexandrine manuscript leaves out the words εν δικαιοσυνη—συντεμνημενον, which makes the sense clearer, and the passage is so quoted by Eusebius. See Griesbach, and Dodson on Isa. x. 23.

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 29.

nant, which, like a seed remaining in the earth, might again sprout up a vigorous and flourishing plant: in this language the apostle describes the present forlorn state of the Jewish nation, as rejected, but not utterly hopeless.

3. The cause of this dispensation is explained, ver. 30—33.

In the first place the fact itself is distinctly stated, ver. 30, 31.

30. *What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue justification, have obtained justification, that justification, however, which is by*  
31. *faith; but that Israel, who pursued a law of justification, hath not attained the law*<sup>1</sup>.

What now is the true state of the case? In plain words, the Gentiles, who had no expectation, and no desire of being admitted into covenant with God, have had the offer made to them, and many of them have accepted it, and have been freely admitted into the community of God's chosen people, by their profession of faith in Christ as the Messiah. Whereas the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God's own ancient people, who highly valued this privilege and were desirous above all things to retain it, and who adopted what they thought the right means for this purpose, have lost their object, having failed in the means which they employed,

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<sup>1</sup> *The law.*] The received text adds "of justification;" but the word *δικαιοσύνης* is omitted in the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other valuable copies.

and being defective in their obedience to the written law. CH. IX.

The apostle next shows what the mistake was into which the Hebrew nation had fallen, the consequences of which had been so very fatal, ver. 32, 33.

*Wherefore? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were to be attained by the works of the law.* Ver. 32.

It may naturally be asked, How could it happen that Israel, so proud of her privileges, so intent upon justification, so unwearied in the employment of what were believed to be the necessary means, should after all be defeated and disappointed in her main object? The answer is obvious: Israel could not bear to submit to the new condition; they would not hear of faith in a crucified Messiah as the means of acceptance with God, but sought after justification in the old way by obedience to a law, the precepts of which they had repeatedly broke, and under the condemning sentence of which they lay without the hope of relief.

*For they stumbled against that stumbling stone, as it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and a rock to strike against; and no one who relieth upon it shall be ashamed.* 33.

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\* *No one—shall be ashamed.*] The apostle quotes from memory and from the LXX. translation; and to answer his purpose he cites from two prophecies, Isaiah xxviii. 16, viii. 14, blending them together so as to express his own meaning in scripture language, probably by way of accommodation only, and because the unpleasant truth would be less offensive when expressed in the words of scripture. The apostle seldom men-

Ch. IX.  
Ver. 33.

To receive as a prophet of God a man who had been born at Nazareth, rejected by the chief priests and pharisees, condemned as a blasphemer, and crucified as a malefactor, and to acknowledge and submit to him as the promised Messiah, was a difficulty which these unhappy Israelites could not surmount; and their sad case may be described in words taken from the prophet Isaiah, ch. xxviii. 16: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone," which though it is there justly described with respect to some, as "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, and a sure foundation," will be what the same prophet represents, ch. viii. 14, "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." And in truth upon this stone they have now fallen from that high eminence which they once held, and are so broken as scarcely to retain the remains of life. Yet still, it is added by the prophet, whosoever believeth in him who is the antitype of this figurative representation, whosoever builds upon this great and precious foundation, shall never be put to shame: for it is a foundation that will never fail; and though at present it is rejected by the house of Jacob, there is reason to hope that this blindness to truth and to their best interest will not always last.

#### IV.

The apostle laments that his countrymen have

tions the rejection of his countrymen without suggesting a hint that this rejection would be neither total nor final; and this was probably his reason for inserting the concluding clause.

grievously mistaken the proper means of justification and acceptance with God, which he particularly describes, and shows from the Jewish scriptures, that it is offered to all who believe, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, ch. x. 1—13. Ch. x.

1. The apostle, while he bears the most hearty good will to his countrymen, is yet constrained to declare, that notwithstanding their earnest desire to abide in covenant with God, they had totally mistaken the means, by misunderstanding the design of the law, chap. x. 1—4.

*Brethren, the affectionate desire<sup>1</sup> of my heart, and my supplication to God for them<sup>2</sup>, is for their salvation<sup>3</sup>.* Ver. 1.

I assure you, my beloved associates in the faith of Christ, that whatever the treatment may have been which I have received from my countrymen, I harbour no resentment against them, but love them sincerely; and that my earnest affectionate wish and prayer for them all is, that they may escape from the condemnation of the law by embracing the doctrine of Christ.

*For I bear them testimony that they have zeal for God<sup>4</sup>: but not according to knowledge.* 2.

<sup>1</sup> *Affectionate desire.*] *Εὐδοκίαν.* “In the accomplishment of which I should find the greatest complacency.” Doddridge.

<sup>2</sup> *For them.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other copies, and is adopted by Griesbach. The received text reads, “for Israel.”

<sup>3</sup> *Salvation.*] “that they may be saved.” Newcome; who explains, “that they may enter into the covenant of salvation here, and into the glories of heaven hereafter.”

<sup>4</sup> *Zeal for God.*] *Gr.* “zeal of God.” This is the well known

Ch. X.  
Ver. 2.

If they lose their high state of privilege, it is not because they are indifferent about it; for I bear them testimony that they are solicitous above all things to maintain their near relation to God as his peculiar people: but they are grievously mistaken in the means which are necessary for this purpose.

3. *For being ignorant of God's method of justification, and seeking to establish their own<sup>1</sup>, they have not submitted to the justification of God.*

Not being aware that the method of justification by the law is now superseded, and being unacquainted with the new method which God hath lately instituted, of justification by faith; they have sought to secure the divine favour by an unreasonable attachment to ceremonial institutions, and have neglected to inquire into, or have refused submission to, that which is appointed by God.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for justification to every believer.*

The design of the Mosaic institute is to lead to a more generous and enlarged dispensation. Its figures and its prophecies are fulfilled in Christ; whose mission from God, as the saviour of the world, is now proposed as the object of that faith which is the ground of justification.

form of the Hebrew superlative, and may signify nothing more than extraordinary zeal. Yet still the object of their zeal was, to remain in their station as the peculiar people of God: both these objects were probably in the apostle's contemplation.

<sup>1</sup> *Their own.*] This is the reading of the Alexandrine and Clermont copies, and of the Vulgate Version. The received text adds, δικαιωσιν, justification.

2. The apostle distinctly explains the different requisitions of the gospel and the law, ver. 5—10. Ch. x.

First, he states the requisition of the law; namely, unfailing obedience, ver. 5.

*For Moses describeth the justification of the law, That the man who performeth them shall live by them.* Ver. 5.

This is an exact quotation from Lev. xviii. 5. The Mosaic law, by which the Jews sought justification, cries, "Keep the commandments and live." This condition the apostle has before shown to have been violated by the Jews; and consequently that justification is not to be obtained by rigorous unrelenting law.

The apostle next describes the language of the new dispensation; which requires faith in the divine mission and resurrection of Christ, as the reasonable and practicable mode of admission to the privileges of the new covenant, ver. 6—10.

*But the justification by faith speaketh thus: Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to conduct Christ down.* 6.

To descend from heaven, was a familiar phrase among the Jews, to express the divine authority of a doctrine or a prophet. So our Lord saith, Matt. xxi. 25, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" And the meaning of the apostle is this: The language of the new dispensation is, Entertain no doubt concerning the divine mission of Christ: do not say, Who shall go to heaven to fetch him down from thence? as

Ch. X. if he had not yet been manifested to the world. For  
Ver. 6. Christ has already appeared on earth as a messenger from God, and has fully established his claim to a divine mission.

7. *Or who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead<sup>1</sup>.*

Nor may you entertain any doubt of the resurrection of Christ. You must not ask, "Who will descend into the region of death, to bring up Christ from the grave?" as if you doubted whether he were already risen. No one who doubts concerning the mission and resurrection of Jesus Christ can with any propriety be admitted into the community of which Christ is the head, or to participate in its blessings and privileges.

8. *But what saith it?*

Having seen what the new dispensation forbids, let us now consider what it requires: and to this the answer is very easy.

—*The doctrine is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart<sup>2</sup>; that is, the doctrine of faith which we preach.*

You need not go far to seek an answer. All of you who have been converted to the faith of Christ, have been taught it already; you have all learned

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<sup>1</sup> *That is, to bring Christ, &c.]* "For that is the same thing as to set aside the resurrection of Christ from the dead." Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *The doctrine is near, &c.]* These words, and those in the sixth verse, are a quotation from Deut. xxx. 11, 13; but it is plainly by way of accommodation, the apostle not meaning to build any argument upon it.



to receive it as a truth of the highest importance : it is, in fact, that doctrine concerning faith in Christ, upon which we, who are authorized to preach the gospel, continually insist, as the principle which lies at the foundation of our hope.

Ch. X.  
Ver. 8.

*That if thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

9.

If you make a public profession that you acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as your master, and that you bow to him as a teacher sent from God ; and if you seriously and sincerely believe that he was raised to life after his crucifixion, by the power of God ; you thus become a member of the community of believers, and are entitled to the privileges of the people of God : you are rescued from the yoke of the law, and from the bondage of idolatry and superstition, and are introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And it is reasonable that such privileges should be entailed upon a sincere belief, and a public profession.

*For, with the heart man believes to justification ; and with the mouth profession is made to salvation.*

10.

If faith is sincere, it is known and accepted by God ; and if this faith is publicly professed, the believer is publicly received into the Christian community ; and is rescued from the dominion of ignorance and darkness, idolatry and vice.

In this passage the apostle states, in the clearest

Ch. X.  
Ver. 10.

language, the fundamental article of the Christian faith ; all that is necessary to entitle a man to be admitted into the community of believers, and to be acknowledged as a Christian brother. “ If thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, or Master, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” How widely different is this truly apostolic symbol, not only from the long catalogue of mysterious and self-contradictory articles, which are the boast, and the disgrace, of many churches calling themselves Christian, but also from that shorter and simpler confession of faith erroneously called the Apostles’ Creed, into which various articles are introduced to which the apostles were strangers ! Nor can we ever hope to see pure Christianity firmly established, till these human formularies are laid aside ; and professing Christians become willing to return to the primitive simplicity of the gospel doctrine, and to own as brethren all who believe in the resurrection of Jesus and who acknowledge him as their Master.

Be it further remembered, that the *public profession* of truth is represented by the apostle as essential to an interest in the blessings of the new covenant. What men believe in their heart, it is required that they shall profess with their lips, and not shrink from any disgrace or persecution which may be the result of a fearless profession. If any are now ashamed of Christ and his words, the time is coming when he also will be ashamed of them.

3. The apostle appeals to the scripture, to confirm his doctrine, ver. 11—13. Ch. x.

*Moreover the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame.* Ver. 11.

I have already shown (ch. ix. 33), that the prophet Isaiah, ch. xxviii. 16, proclaims security to those who believe, and who build upon the true foundation. And it is observable that he by no means limits the promise to the Hebrew nation: his expressions are general and indefinite, and include all believers of all ages and countries.

*For there is no distinction of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord<sup>1</sup> over all is bountiful to all who call themselves by his name: for whosoever taketh upon himself the name of the Lord shall be saved<sup>2</sup>.* 12.  
13.

<sup>1</sup> *The same Lord, &c.*] “all have the same Lord, abundantly kind (πλεων) to all that call themselves by his name.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Whosoever taketh upon himself the name of the Lord.*] *Επικαλεσται.* So Wakefield. In the public version, “whosoever calleth upon,” &c. The word will bear either sense. “I cannot but think that ‘all who call upon him,’ ver. 12, signifies all who are open and professed Christians,” Locke; who, in justification of his interpretation, observes, “that it will be an ill rule for interpreting St. Paul to tie up his use of any text he brings out of the Old Testament to that which is taken to be the meaning of it there.” Dr. Taylor, who does not quite approve of Mr. Locke’s remark, vindicates the apostle’s method of quoting scripture, by observing, “that he did not always quote in the same manner, or, for the same purpose.” He adds, 1. Sometimes his intention goes no further than using the same strong expressions as being equally applicable to the point in hand, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8, 18.—2. Sometimes the design is only to show that cases are parallel, or that what happened in his time corresponded to that which happened in former days, Rom. ii. 24, viii. 36, ix. 27, 28, 29, xi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, xv. 21.—3. Sometimes the quotation is intended only to explain a doc-

Ch. x.  
Ver. 13.

You observe that the prophet makes no national distinctions. Nor is it reasonable that such distinctions should exist any longer; for God is equally related to all his creatures, the kind impartial parent and benefactor of all: and therefore all men of all nations who sincerely serve him, and who profess their regard to him in the way that he has appointed, shall be accepted by him. And to this doctrine the prophet Joel bears his testimony, as well as Isaiah. For he expressly declares, that in the times to which he alludes, all that worship God, and profess themselves his servants, shall be accepted by him and rescued from guilt and misery, Joel ii. 32.

## V.

The apostle vindicates the mission of the preachers of the gospel; though it was foreseen, that the offer of its blessings would be accepted by the Gentiles and rejected by the Jews, ch. x. 14 to the end.

1. None could ever become professors of the doctrine of Christ, if missionaries were not authorized to teach it, ver. 14, 15.

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trinal point, Rom. i. 17, iv. 6—8, 18—21, ix. 20, 21, x. 15, xv. 3.—4. Sometimes to prove a doctrinal point, Rom. iii. 4, 10—19, iv. 3, 17, v. 12—14, ix. 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, x. 5, 11, 13, xii. 19, 20, xiii. 9, xiv. 11.—5. Sometimes to prove that something was predicted or properly foretold in the prophetic writings, Rom. ix. 25, 26, 33, x. 16, 19, 20, 21, xi. 26, 27, xv. 9—13.

*How then can they take his name<sup>1</sup>, on whom they have not believed?* Ch. X.  
Ver. 14.

How can any call themselves after the name of Christ, and thus become entitled to the blessings of the gospel, if they do not believe in his divine mission?

*And how can they believe on him of whom they have not heard?*

How is it possible that men should believe Jesus to be a prophet of God, if they never even heard his name?

*And how can they hear without a preacher?*

If no one will undertake to teach, how could any one ever learn?

*And how can there be preachers, unless they be sent?* 15.

To preach the gospel to good purpose requires peculiar qualifications. It is not every one who presumptuously intrudes into the office of a teacher that is duly qualified for it. A man, to preach effectually, must receive a commission from God, and be suitably endowed with those gifts and powers which are necessary to excite the attention of unbelievers, whether Jews or heathen, and to fix conviction on the heart.

The apostle is here speaking of the first teachers

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<sup>1</sup> *How can they take his name, &c.]* "How can they call themselves the disciples of a master, and take his name as the followers of his doctrine, whom they never regarded?" Wakefield. Gr. "How shall they," &c. These are instances in which the future indicative has a modal sense, after the Hebrew idiom.

Ch. X.  
Ver. 15.

of the gospel; who could have little hope of success unless they were properly appointed and instructed by the apostles and evangelists, and invested with those spiritual gifts and powers which in the apostolic age were necessary to rouse the attention and to subdue the heart. And to such persons in a peculiar and appropriate sense may be applied the words of the prophet Isaiah.

*As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who publish good tidings of peace, who publish good tidings of good things !*

These words are borrowed from Isaiah, lii. 7, and in their primary sense they express the joyful acclamations of the watchmen of Jerusalem, when they first discover upon the mountain tops the heralds who are sent to announce the approach of Jehovah at the head of his chosen people; whom he hath redeemed from the Babylonian yoke, and is conducting through the wilderness to their own country: and well does it describe the joy of those who justly appreciate the joyful tidings of deliverance from the yoke of the law, and the bondage of heathenism, which were announced by the first authorized publishers of the gospel of Christ.

- The apostle now draws his conclusion, ver. 17.
17. *So then, this faith cometh by hearing, and this hearing by the word of God<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> *So then.*] ἀλλὰ οὖν: the form in which the apostle introduces his grand conclusion. This transposition of the 16th and 17th verses, as suggested by L'Enfant, is so necessary to clearing up the apostle's reasoning, that the propriety of it can scarcely be doubted, though it is unsupported by authorities.

Thus it appears, that all who believe in Christ, believe in consequence of suitable instruction ; but this instruction can only be communicated by those who derive their authority from God, and are duly qualified by him for the successful discharge of their office.

CH. X.  
Ver. 17.

2. The apostle argues, that the want of success is no objection against the divine commission of the first preachers of the gospel, ver. 16, 18.

An objector may perhaps urge the fact,

*But all have not obeyed the gospel ;* and he may hence conclude, that God did not authorize the preachers of it : for, if he had, no doubt they would have been successful. 16.

This, however, the apostle remarks, is by no means a certain conclusion :

*For Isaiah saith, Lord, who<sup>s</sup> hath believed our report ?*

And this language he uses, Isa. liii. 1, when speaking under the character of the Messiah. But if the Messiah himself complains of his want of success, it can be no objection against his messengers, that their disappointment is similar to that of their master.

This is one instance among many, of the apostle's sudden change of persons without particular

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\* *Lord, who, &c.*] Isa. liii. 1. The word Lord being found here and in John xii. 38, and also in all the copies of the LXX. has probably by some inadvertence been lost from the Hebrew text. See Dodson's Isa. *in loc.*

Ch. X. notice. An objection is started and the answer  
Ver. 16. given, while the current of the discourse remains  
unbroken by any formal change in the construction.

It may also be observed, that the apostle is very happy in his quotation from Isaiah; for the words being the complaint of the Messiah himself, the reply at once stops the mouth of the objector.

The apostle proceeds :

18. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, verily: their voice went forth to all the earth, and their words to the extremities of the world.*

Can it be denied, that the preachers of the gospel have performed their duty? Have not the glad tidings been circulated far and wide, both among Jews and Gentiles? Undoubtedly they have; and that to such an extent, that it may be said, in the language of the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 4, "that the light of the gospel, like that of the natural sun, has diffused itself over every part of the habitable world."

Let it be remembered, that this language was used by the apostle within less than thirty years after our Lord's resurrection; for the epistle to the Romans was written about A.D. 58. And this early and rapid diffusion of the gospel can in no way be satisfactorily accounted for, but by the gifts and powers with which the first teachers were endowed. The hand of the Lord was with them, and therefore multitudes believed, and turned to the Lord.



3. Though the Jews have not received the gospel, this is an event which, how little soever to be expected, and how deeply soever to be regretted, is no more than what the prophets themselves have foretold, ver. 19—21. Ch. X.

*But I say, Hath not Israel known<sup>1</sup> ?* Ver. 19.

It cannot be denied that the gospel has been sufficiently published to the Jewish people ; but have they acknowledged its authority ? Is it possible, when messengers were sent, with manifest credentials of a divine commission, to proclaim the tidings and to offer the blessings of the gospel, that while the Gentiles listened and obeyed, the Jews should have been so ignorant and so besotted as to turn a deaf ear to the message from heaven, and to reject the grace of the gospel ? Can human folly and depravity be equal to so absurd and perilous a determination ? Alas ! it is but too true. Yet their rejection of the message from heaven is no

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<sup>1</sup> *Hath not Israel known ?* “ known this.” Newcome. Mr. Locke says, “ In this and the next verses St. Paul seems to suppose a reasoning to this purpose : viz. That they did not deserve to be rejected, because they did not know that the Gentiles were to be admitted.” And most of the commentators interpret the text upon this principle, I think erroneously : for the apostle having stated the unsuccessfulness of the ministry as an argument in the mouth of an objector against the authority of the gospel missionaries, continues his reply to this objection to the end of the chapter. He divides the objection into two parts : ver. 18, Have they not heard ? Answer, They have ; as it was foretold that they should. Ver. 19. Have they acknowledged and received the gospel ? Answer, No ; as it was foretold that the Gentiles would embrace the offers of the gospel, but that the Jews would reject them. That the word γινωσκω sometimes bears the sense of επιγινωσκω, is well known. See Schleusner.

Ch. X.  
Ver. 19.

objection to its truth and authenticity, but the contrary; for this conduct, strange as it is, both of Jews and Gentiles, was actually and in the clearest language foretold by the Jewish prophets.

*First, Moses saith<sup>1</sup>, I will move you to jealousy by those who are not a people: I will provoke you to anger by a nation void of understanding.*

Deut. xxxii. 21, God denounces his anger against apostate Israel; and as they, his chosen people, had excited his jealousy and provoked his indignation by introducing idols as rivals of his authority, and co-partners in his worship; so will he provoke them to jealousy by selecting as his people those who are not now his people, that is, the believing Gentiles; and will excite their indignation by the favours which he will bestow on a people enlightened by his word, but who are now treated as ignorant and brutish by the Jews, who value themselves on their superior light, while they reject the wisdom which is from above.

20. *But Isaiah<sup>2</sup> very boldly saith, I was found by  
them who sought me not: I was made manifest to  
21. those who inquired not after me. Whereas con-*

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<sup>1</sup> *Moses saith, &c.*] “The design of Moses,” says Dr. Priestley, “was to describe the low state to which the Jews would be reduced in consequence of their disobedience, so as to be oppressed and insulted by the meanest nations; but the apostle applies all this to the provocations the Jews would receive from the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, whom they held in the greatest contempt.” Dr. Taylor, however, contends, that the text as it stands in Deuteronomy, is full to the apostle’s purpose.

<sup>2</sup> *But Isaiah, &c.*] “In the passage here alluded to it is probable the prophet only meant the Israelites, whom he was de-

*cerning Israel he saith, I have stretched forth my hands all the day long toward a disobedient and a gainsaying people.*

Ch. X.  
Ver. 21.

And to conclude: nothing can be more plain and decisive than the language of Isaiah concerning both the Jews and Gentiles, Isaiah lxx. 1, 2. When God is represented as being found and made manifest to those who were careless and indifferent to this great discovery, the Gentiles only can be intended; because, at no time could it be said that the Israelites were indifferent to the high privilege of being the children of God. And it is no less obvious, that the Jewish nation falls under the second description, of refusing the invitations of mercy, and rejecting the offers of the gospel: not because they were indifferent to the object, but because they would not believe the testimony which was given to the divine legation of Jesus and his apostles.

From all these considerations, therefore, the conclusion however lamentable is undeniably true, that as the case now stands, the unbelieving Jews, who at present constitute the main body of that unhappy nation, are rejected from their former state of covenant with God, and are deprived of the honours and privileges which appertain to a covenant state;

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scribing as having apostatized to idolatry." Dr. Priestley.—Bishop Lowth, however, Mr. Dodson, and most other commentators, understand the prophet's language in its primary sense, as describing the call of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews.

Ch. X. while the believing Gentiles, having listened to the  
Ver. 21. invitations and complied with the terms of the gospel, are admitted into the family of God, and are allowed to participate in those privileges, which were formerly limited to the posterity of Jacob.

## SECTION II.

Ch. XI. *The apostle proceeds to show, that this rejection of the Jewish nation is neither total nor final; and that while it lasts, it answers very important purposes under the divine administration, which their ultimate restoration, here expressly foretold, also will. Ch. xi. throughout.*

### I.

This rejection of the Jewish nation, even at present, is not total, ch. xi. 1—10.

Ver. 1. *Do I say then, that God has rejected his people? Far from it.*

I have but too undeniably proved, that the great mass of the Jewish nation are at this time rejected by God, on account of their unbelief: they have refused the offers of the gospel; they are no longer a peculiar people. But do I mean to be understood in so rigorous a sense, as if God had excluded every individual of his ancient people from the hope of mercy, and from participating in his favour? Very far from it: all are not unbelievers, and therefore all are not under the sentence of condemnation.

1. 'The apostle himself was a happy exception from the general doom. Ch. XI.  
Ver. 1.

*For I am myself an Israelite of the race of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

If the rejection were so universal as the question supposes, I must myself be lost; for no person has better pretensions than I have, to a descent from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But instead of being rejected from the covenant, I am not only admitted as a believer, but have been honoured with the apostolic character and mission.

2. There is still a remnant of faithful worshipers, as in the time of general apostasy in the days of Elijah, ver. 2—6.

*God hath not rejected his people whom he foreknew.* 2.

God foresaw that though the Jews as a nation would reject the gospel, and would therefore be rejected by him, a certain portion of individuals would nevertheless manifest a different spirit, and would become believers in Christ. And these, so far from rejecting, he would receive into favour, and admit to all the privileges of the new covenant.

*Do ye not know what the scripture saith in the history of Elijah? how he complained to God against Israel? "Lord, they have slain thy pro-* 3.

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<sup>1</sup> *How he complained, &c.]* See Taylor and Macknight. The received text adds the word *saying*, which is wanting in the best copies. "how he addresseth God." Abp. Newcome. "Sicut *ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ τινος* est negotium alicujus commendare, ita *ἐν-*

Ch. XI. *phets and have digged down thine altars ; and I*  
 Ver. 3. *am left alone, and they seek my life."*

Do not you recollect, at the time of the general apostasy of Israel in the days of Elijah, when Jezebel, the idolatrous wife of Ahab, had put to death all the prophets of the true God whom she could find, and had given orders for the execution of Elijah himself ; how that prophet, having escaped into the wilderness, and being questioned by the oracle why he had abandoned his post, is reported, 1 Kings xix. 14, to have replied in the language of complaint against his countrymen, that they had so universally apostatized to idolatry, that having pulled down the altars of the true God and massacred his prophets, he was now the only true worshiper of God that was left in the country ; and that it was in vain for him to return, and to reclaim them to their duty, for he knew that orders had been issued to put him to death ?

4. *But what saith the divine oracle to him ? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bended the knee to Baal."*

The prophet was greatly mistaken in his calculations ; for the number of true worshipers, of those who secretly adhered to the God of Israel, and who resolutely abstained from every idolatrous act, was far beyond what he had calculated. He thought himself quite alone : but the oracle, having ordered

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*τυγχανειν κατα τινος est aliquem accusare."* Rosenmuller.—  
 "how he appeareth before God with respect to Israel." Wakefield.

him to consecrate certain persons as instruments in the hands of providence for the extermination of idolatry, adds, ver. 18, "This will not be the extermination of all the inhabitants of Israel. Solitary as you may suspect yourself to be, you have many associates: and when all the idolaters are slain, I have still reserved seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baul, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 4.

*And so also in the present time there is a remnant according to the election of favour.*

b.

Thus, to all appearance, in the present age, the Jews are nearly as unanimous in their rejection of Christ as their ancestors were in the worship of Baul. A superficial observer would conclude, that almost to a man they resisted the truth, and were persecutors of all who professed it. But this judgement would be erroneous: there are still a few, a select number, a small remnant, who believe in Jesus; and who, in opposition to the great mass of their countrymen, joyfully accept the proffered mercy, and through the free and abundant favour of God are admitted into the community of true believers.

*But if it be of favour, it is no more of works; otherwise favour would cease to be favour<sup>1</sup>.*

c.

Observe, I say, that they are chosen through favour, by the free unmerited goodness of God: after

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<sup>1</sup> The received text adds, "but if by works, then it is no more through favour, otherwise work is no more work:" but these words are wanting in the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and other manuscripts and versions, and are omitted by Griesbach.

Ch. XI. having forfeited all claim to continuance in their former state of privilege, they are now admitted into the new and better covenant, by faith, and not by legal observances ; for if they could make good their claim by works of law, they would obtain that as a right which they now receive as a free gift, to Jews as well as to Gentiles.

Ver. 6. This observation the apostle crowds in, to recall to the attention and impress upon the minds of his readers a due sense of that important doctrine which he had established at large at the commencement of the epistle, that the dispensation of the gospel is the free unmerited gift of God.

It cannot be amiss to remark here, that the faithful servants of God have no reason to be discouraged in evil times. In seasons of general apostasy there have always been, as in the times of the prophet, a chosen few who have been the depositaries of truth and virtue ; and who, however unknown or unnoticed by the world, are all under the eye and protection of an omniscient and a faithful God, who will at the proper season appear to plead his own cause, and to reward those who preserve their allegiance in times of prevailing declension.

3. The chosen number having been thus admitted to the privileges of the gospel, the residue, that is, the great mass of the Jewish nation, are excluded, agreeably to the declarations of their own scriptures, ver. 7—10.

7. *How is it then ? what Israel seeks, that he hath*



*not attained; but the elect<sup>1</sup> have attained it, and the rest are blinded.* Ch. XI. Ver. 7.

What now is the real state of the case? It is plainly this: that high state of privilege, and peculiar relation to God, which the Israelites always affected, and to which they continually aspired, they have failed in securing; not indeed altogether and universally, for a select number, a small proportion who have submitted to the terms of the gospel, have obtained it; and with less external pomp, and less of ceremonial detail, they are as rich in privilege as the Jewish nation ever was in its highest prosperity. But the bulk of the nation, labouring under a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, have not known the day of their visitation, and have rejected the offers of peace.

*As it is written* (Isaiah xxix. 10, Deut. xxix. 4), “*God hath given to them a spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day.*” 8.

Such is the amazing stupefaction which has seized the Jewish nation at this time, and such their gross inattention to the extraordinary scenes which have passed before them, and so obstinately have they resisted even the evidence of their senses, and rejected the repeated offers of mercy, that the emphatical language of Isaiah and of Moses is not too strong to express the folly of their conduct.

*And David saith* (Ps. lxxix. 22, 23), “*Let their*” 9.

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<sup>1</sup> *The elect.*] In the original, “the election.”

Ch. XI. *table become a snare, and a net, and a trap, and a*  
 Ver. 10. *recompense unto them*<sup>1</sup>. *Let their eyes be dark-*  
*ened that they may not see, and keep their back con-*  
*tinually bent down.*

As the just retribution of this wilful blindness, the imprecation of David upon his malicious enemies may be regarded as prophetic of the present state of my unhappy countrymen. Let that which should promote their comfort betray them into misery; let them never discern their true interest, and never rise from their depressed and miserable condition.

## II.

The rejection of the Jewish nation is not final, but in the mean time it is productive of great benefit to the Gentiles; and their ultimate restoration will produce still greater advantages: so that the chosen Gentile has no right to insult the rejected Jew. Ch. xi. 11 to the end.

1. The fall of Israel is not final; but, being the means of exalting the Gentiles, will, by exciting emulation, operate to their own recovery, ver. 11.

11. *I say, then, Have they stumbled so as to fall?*

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wakefield observes, that "there can be no doubt of an error in the last words of this verse, as unfaithfully exhibiting the sense of the original author:" he adds, "it is surprising that our apostle should choose to quote so punctually from the version of the LXX., so outrageously absurd as it is in many places." Mr. W. approves "the Syriac Version as more agreeable to the uniformity of Hebrew composition." "Let their table become a snare to them, and what should be a recompense a stumbling-block." The common translation, agreeably to the

*Far from it: but through their lapse, salvation<sup>2</sup> is come to the Gentiles, to excite their emulation.*

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 11.

I acknowledge and I lament the present unbelief and rejection of my countrymen. But let me not be misunderstood: is it supposed that I have asserted that they are so fallen as never to rise again? I never intended any such thing. In fact, their rejection of the gospel has been the cause of its being offered to the Gentiles; for in all places the tenor of our commission was, first to offer it to the Jews. But the acceptance of the gospel by the Gentiles, and their consequent privileges, while the descendants of Abraham are left in a forlorn and wretched state, will eventually induce the Israelites themselves to reflect upon their disgrace and misery, and to aspire to the recovery of their long lost privileges, which are now in the possession of those who were formerly regarded as greatly inferior to themselves.

2. The restoration of the Jews to their former privileges, will be far more beneficial to the Gentiles than their rejection and unbelief, ver. 12—16.

*But if their lapse be the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!*

12.

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literal sense of the Hebrew, reads thus, "Let their table become a snare before them, and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not, and make their loins continually to shake."

<sup>2</sup>Salvation.] "When the Jews rejected the gospel, it was immediately preached to the Gentiles." Newcome. Salvation, i. e. admission to the privileges of the gospel. See ver. 26, note,

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 12.

I have said, and it is true, that the Jews having rejected the offer of the gospel which was first made to them, we were authorized to make the same offer to the Gentiles, who, happily for themselves, listened to it and embraced it: so that they were made rich by the folly of the Jews. But when the Jewish nation itself becomes wise and embraces the doctrine of Christ, it cannot be doubted that their conversion will be still more beneficial to the Gentile world: for, being then animated by the benevolent spirit of the gospel, they will actively exert themselves to diffuse its blessings.

13. *(For I direct my discourse to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles I honour my ministry, if by any means I may excite to emulation my kindred, and may save some of them.)*
14. *nour my ministry, if by any means I may excite to emulation my kindred, and may save some of them.)*

The apostle introduces this appeal to the Gentiles in a parenthesis, to show that in what he was about to advance, it was by no means his intention to disparage them, but merely to excite the emulation of his own countrymen and kinsmen: *q. d.*

I am aware that I am writing to a church chiefly consisting of Gentile converts; and it is my honour that my apostolic commission is specially directed to the Gentiles: and so far from undervaluing the object of this mission, I glory in it as a high distinction, and feel a peculiar affection for converted heathen: and this I state as a preliminary fact, that you may not suspect that in the language which I may use upon this subject, I have any intention to degrade you, or to represent you as in a state of

inferiority. My only design is, if possible, to rouse the dormant spirit of my beloved countrymen, and to excite their emulation to participate in the privileges which you now possess. Which happy event, whenever it takes place, will not fail to make a great addition to the privilege and happiness of the Gentile world.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 14.

*For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will the reception of them be, but life from the dead<sup>1</sup>?* 15.

If, as I have just stated, the unbelief and folly of the Jewish nation, and their contempt of the gospel, have been the means of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles, who have accepted it, and have been admitted to all the privileges of the people of God, what will the ultimate conversion of the Jews be, but a resurrection to life? They who are now dead to every virtuous principle, to every generous feeling, to every cheerful hope, and are excluded from the community of believers like a dead carcass from the living world, will then be animated by all the vivifying, invigorating, and benevolent principles of the gospel, and will be as active in promoting its doctrine, its temper and spirit, as they are now in-

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<sup>1</sup> *Life from the dead.*] “Meaning to the world, to us Gentile Christians.” Dr. Taylor, who explains the text, as meaning that the Gentile Christians shall, by the conversion of the Jews, be advanced to a state of improvement as much superior to that in which they antecedently were as life to death. Perhaps the sense may be, that the Jews being raised to life by their conversion to the Christian religion, will infuse a new spirit into the Gentiles. The elliptical style of the apostle renders his meaning ambiguous.

Ch. XI. sensible to its excellence, and hostile to its inter-  
Ver. 15. ests. And this active zeal of the converted Israel-  
ites, cannot fail to be attended with the most re-  
viving and beneficial effects upon the Gentile church.  
Nor can it be doubted, that this most desirable event  
will be accomplished in its season.

16. *For<sup>1</sup> if the first fruit be holy, so also is the mass;  
and if the root be holy, so also are the branches.*  
See Numb. xv. 20, 21.

As a cake of the first meal after the harvest, of-  
fered as the law directs, consecrates the whole mass  
of bread, and as the virtue of the root must natu-  
rally be communicated to the branches, so Abra-  
ham and his immediate descendants, being the root  
and the first fruits of the Hebrew nation, and being  
freely chosen by God, and consecrated to his ser-  
vice, and taken into his covenant, are a pledge, not-  
withstanding present unfavourable appearances, that  
Israel shall not be finally and totally rejected, but  
that in due time they shall again be reclaimed, and  
restored to the honours and privileges which their  
ancestors possessed.

3. Under the emblem of wild branches engrafted  
upon a good stock, the apostle warns the converted  
Gentiles not to insult the rejected Jew, ver. 17—22.

17. *Now if some of the branches were broken off, and  
thou being a wild olive-tree wert grafted in among*

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<sup>1</sup> For.] The Alexandrine copy instead of *δε* reads *γὰρ*, which  
suits the connexion best.

*them, and wert made a partaker with them of the* Ch. XI.  
*root and fatness of the olive-tree, boast not against* Ver. 18,  
*the branches : but if thou boast, remember thou*  
*bearest not the root, but the root thee.*

The apostle's meaning is sufficiently intelligible, though his illustration is inconsistent with general usage ; as the wild scion is never grafted into the good stock, and if it were, it would not be improved by it. The meaning of the apostle, however, is obvious. The Jewish nation were originally the chosen people of God, and as such, were possessed of many valuable privileges, which at one time they improved, and bore fruit in proportion, honourable to themselves, acceptable to God, and useful to others. They are now degenerate, the barren useless branches are broken off, and their place supplied by scions from a different stock ; upon which it is expected that good fruit will grow. But let not these engrafted boughs set themselves up against the natural but discarded branches. Let not the accepted Gentile taunt and insult the rejected Jew : the ancient, but now revolted and discarded people of God, are objects of compassion, rather than of contempt. - But if you, the favoured Gentile, will indulge your sarcasms against the degraded Jew, recollect that you are not so much his superior as you may imagine. The Gentile is more in debt to the Jew than the Jew to the Gentile : in fact, the Hebrew nation owe nothing to the Gentiles ; while all the privileges of converted Gentiles are but the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 18.

Thus strenuously does the apostle plead for kindness to his countrymen, even in their fallen and rejected state: but with how little success, the sad history of the ancient people of God, from the apostolic age to the present hour, too plainly demonstrates. Surely it ill becomes those whose Saviour was of the Jewish nation, to insult and persecute those whom he calls his countrymen: still less does it become the true disciples of Jesus to imitate that unhappy people in the worst feature of their character.

19. *Wilt thou say then, The branches have been broken off, that I might be grafted in?*

Wilt thou plead in defence of this contemptuous treatment of the fallen Jew, that he is cast away as a worthless branch, to make room for thee as a fruitful bough?

20. *Well. They were broken off for unbelief, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but*  
21. *fear. For if God spared not the natural branches,*  
*beware lest he spare not thee.*

True; it cannot be denied that you who are expected to bear fruit, are substituted in the room of the withered branch. Yet this affords no cause for boasting. The Israelites lost their interest in the covenant, because they would not attend to the credentials of the true Messiah. And remember, you took their place, not upon the ground of antecedent merit, but solely because you were wise enough to accept the offers of the gospel: and while you continue to believe in Christ, you will be acknowledged



as members of his church, and entitled to the privileges of believers ; but no longer. If temptation and persecution cause you to apostatize, all your privileges are forfeited. Instead, therefore, of insulting the fallen Jew, be solicitous to maintain your own station, and to guard against apostasy : for if you fall away, God will no doubt deal with you as he now deals with his ancient people.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 21.

*Behold, therefore, the goodness, and the severity of God : towards those who have fallen, severity ; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness<sup>1</sup> ; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off.*

22.

Reflect seriously upon the diversity of the divine dispensations towards different characters, as they improve or neglect their respective privileges ; how severe to his ancient people who have apostatized from his covenant ! how kind to thee who art admitted into their place ; not upon the ground of merit, but of pure and undeserved mercy : which mercy will doubtless be continued as long as it is valued and improved ! But if you, like Israel, neglect and despise your privileges, you, like them, shall be cut off, and cast away.

4. Under the same symbol the apostle represents the propriety, and probability of the restoration of Israel, if they should receive the Christian faith, ver. 23, 24.

*And they also, if they do not continue in unbe-*

23.

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<sup>1</sup> In his goodness.] “deserving his kindness.” Newcome.

Ch. XI. *lief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft*  
Ver. 24. *them in again. For if thou wert cut out from the*  
*olive-tree naturally wild, and contrary to nature*  
*wert grafted into a good olive-tree, how much more*  
*shall these, who were the natural branches, be graft-*  
*ed into their own olive-tree ?*

But if, arguing from the severity of God, we conclude that the Gentile believers will be discarded, if they should apostatize like the Jews, much more, arguing from the goodness of God, may we conclude that if the Jews abandon their unbelief, they shall again be received into favour. It may indeed appear impossible to graft a withered and a severed branch again into the parent stock : but nothing is too hard for God. And if you, a wild branch of a wild olive-tree, have contrary to nature been grafted into the good olive-tree, it is surely still less improbable, that they who were originally branches of the good olive-tree should be restored to their primitive state.

The apostle's meaning is very clear, though his parallel does not hold ; for in the culture of fruit, no such thing is known as the grafting of a wild scion into a good stock in order to improve it ; or, the restoration of a withered branch to the parent tree. But the writer's object being to make himself understood, he did not concern himself about the correctness of his similitude.

5. The apostle directly asserts that it is the plan of providence announced in prophecy, that the Is-

raelites shall in due time be restored to favour, ver. Ch. XI.  
25—27.

*Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant of this mystery<sup>1</sup>, lest you should have too high an opinion of yourselves, that a partial blindness hath happened to Israel, till the complement of the Gentiles<sup>2</sup> shall have entered in.* Ver. 25.

And, to put an end to all doubt upon this subject, and to prevent Gentile believers from being unduly elated at their present temporary superiority over the fallen Israelites, I now announce to you, as a part of that revelation with which I am entrusted, and which was formerly unknown, that this blindness of the Jewish nation to the claims of their Messiah, and their obstinate rejection of him, is but partial and temporary; it neither extends to the whole nation, nor will it be perpetual: and it is permitted in the plan of providence to take place at present, and they unwittingly give up their station in

<sup>1</sup> *This mystery.*] “this hidden truth which I now reveal. See 1 Cor. xv. 51, on which place Dr. Wall defines a mystery to be, what God purposes to do, but that purpose of his, has not till now been declared.” Newcome.

<sup>2</sup> *The complement of the Gentiles.*] το πληρωμα not us is usually understood, till the whole body of the Gentiles is completely introduced into the church, but till the Gentiles who being the complement, or that portion which when added to the Jews makes the church complete, have obtained an entrance into the church. So that the Jews are described as leaving the church to make way for the Gentiles; but not as waiting till all the Gentiles are come in before they return again. Comp. ver. 12, 15. For this sense of the word πληρωμα, see Eph. i. 23, and Locke on that passage. See also Matt. ix. 16, where πληρωμα signifies the patch that is put in to fill up the rent in an old garment. See Macknight's note on ver. 12.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 25.

the church, in order to make room for the accession of the Gentiles, who in the divine contemplation constitute an integral portion of the universal church, without which it would not be complete, and who take advantage of the secession of their elder brethren, the Jews, to enter, and to occupy their proper station in the church.

26. *And so all Israel will be saved*<sup>1</sup>; *as it is written,*  
*The deliverer will come out of Sion, and he will*  
 27. *turn away impiety from Jacob; and this shall be*  
*my covenant with them when I shall take away*  
*their sins*<sup>2</sup>.

Thus Israel, having in part left their place to make room for their Gentile brethren, when this end

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<sup>1</sup> *Will be saved,*] i. e. "will be converted to Christianity." Newcome.—"They are said to be saved, because, by their coming into the Christian church they shall have the means of salvation bestowed upon them. See ver. 11." Macknight.—"The first step the goodness of God took in execution of his purpose of election, was to rescue them from the sin and idolatry of their heathen state, and to bring them into the light and privileges of the gospel. With regard to which the language of scripture is, that he *saved* them. 1 Cor. i. 18, vii. 16, x. 33; Eph. ii. 8; 1 Thess. ii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9." Taylor's Key, No. 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup> *As it is written, &c.*] The quotation is from Isaiah lix. 20, 21, in the LXX., which differs materially from the Hebrew. Bishop Lowth and Mr. Dodson both prefer the reading of the LXX. in ver. 21; and Mr. Dodson supposes that the clause "when I shall take away their sin" has been dropped both from the Hebrew and the LXX. The Hebrew is thus translated in the public version: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."

shall have been accomplished, and the Gentiles have been received into the church, they who went out shall be invited back, and shall all find safety and peace in the church of Christ. Thus shall the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled, Isa. lix. 20, 21, the sense of which is, that a great deliverer would in due time arise among the Jews, who would put an end to all idolatry and apostasy, and who would restore them to that state of privilege from which they had fallen, and from which they would never apostatize again.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 27.

Upon this paragraph it may be remarked, that the word *mystery* is here used to express, not what is now unintelligible, but what being formerly unknown is now revealed, and which the apostle was commissioned to publish ; such was the ultimate restoration of the Jews to the privileges which they had forfeited.

Further, when it is said, that “ all Israel shall be saved,” the meaning is, not that every individual shall be brought into a state which shall ensure his final happiness, but that all shall be introduced into the community of believers and become partakers of its privileges ; they shall cease to be outcasts from God ; the sentence of outlawry shall be reversed. This is one instance out of many in the writings of the apostle, in which the word *salvation* expresses present privilege, not ultimate happiness.

The prophecy is quoted chiefly from the LXX. or Greek translation ; it differs a little from the Hebrew, and is probably in this instance more correct. It appears to be a prophecy of the advent of the Mes-

Ch. XI. siah, for the purpose of recovering and restoring  
Ver. 27. Israel ; it finishes abruptly, and in the original it is  
a promise of the perpetuity of the new covenant  
which probably the apostle had also in view.

6. Though the temporary rejection of the Jews may be incidentally beneficial to the Gentiles, yet the gracious purposes of God towards his ancient people shall not be revoked, ver. 28, 29.

28. *With respect to the gospel, they are enemies because of you ; but with respect to the election, they*  
29. *are beloved because of their fathers. For the free gifts and the invitation of God are not to be repented of.*

The true state of the case is this : The moral condition of the Israelites may be considered in a twofold view, as it regards the success of the gospel, and as it regards the purpose and promise of God. With respect to the former, the Jews are permitted to fall away through unbelief, and to exclude themselves from the blessings of the covenant, to make room for you Gentiles, to whom the gospel is offered, in consequence of the rejection of it by God's ancient people.

But with regard to the purpose of God, who selected this favoured people as the depositaries of his will, and the heirs of his mercy, and who promised to their pious forefathers, that their posterity should be eminently blessed, he still loves them for their fathers' sake, and will eventually fulfill every promise. For all his promises are founded upon a cer-

tain fore-sight of every event ; so that his counsels are not liable to be changed by any unforeseen occurrence ; not even by the evil affections, or perverse conduct of any of his creatures. For while, as in the present case, he overrules the apostasy of the Jewish nation for the production of a greater good, he will not suffer their apostasy and guilt to interfere with his kind designs towards them, but will fulfill all his gracious promises to his ancient people to their utmost extent ; and by means abundantly efficacious, though at present not revealed, he will reclaim the posterity of Abraham to the privileges and blessings which their ancestors possessed, and which he promised to their descendants.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 29.

7. The design of providence in permitting the unbelief, first of the Gentiles, and now of the Jews, is, that each in their turn should be, and should acknowledge themselves to be, objects of mercy, ver. 30—32.

*Moreover, as ye formerly were unbelievers in God, but now, through their unbelief, have become objects of mercy ; so, likewise, these are now become unbelievers through the mercy shown to you<sup>1</sup>, that they also may become objects of mercy.*

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<sup>1</sup> Through the mercy shown to you, that, &c.] τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλεει, ἰν α, κ. τ. λ. “ even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.” This is the public version, and most generally adopted. But the version in the text better corresponds with the arrangement in the original ; and is thus explained by Mr. Locke : “ As you the Gentiles formerly stood out, and were not the people of

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 31.

As a further illustration of the wisdom of divine providence in the present rejection of the Jews, it may be observed, that you Gentiles were formerly aliens from God, but that the privileges of the gospel having been offered to you in consequence of the rejection of them by the Jews, you wisely accepted them as a free gift, as an act of the free grace and mercy of God. And in the same manner, the Jews, having now become unbelievers, and that in a great measure in consequence of the free admission of the Gentiles into the church, are now

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God, but yet have now obtained mercy so as to be taken in *through the standing out of the Jews*, who submit not to the gospel, even so they now have stood out, *by reason of your being in mercy admitted*, that they also—may again hereafter be admitted.” Dr. Taylor objects that this interpretation involves the apostle in a contradiction, viz. “that the Gentile was taken in because the Jew stood out; and the Jew stood out because the Gentile was taken in.” It is plain that the apostle means to make a verbal antithesis, in which he often delights; but, as Dr. Doddridge well observes, the writer refers to different periods. The Gentiles were rejected because they continued idolaters, when Abraham believed, and his posterity were taken into covenant: now, under the gospel dispensation, Abraham’s posterity are rejected because they disbelieve; and one great cause of their unbelief is the mercy shown to you by the free offer of covenant blessings unincumbered with ritual obligations. See Acts xiii. 46, xxii. 22. And the great design of all is, that the Gentiles now, and the Jews eventually, may obtain the same blessing; and that it may be obtained by both parties, not as a right, but as a free gift; not as the reward of merit, but as the boon of mercy.

Mr. Wakfield translates the passage, “So have they now disobeyed the mercy shown to you, and will hereafter obtain mercy.” But as in the next verse he translates *απισθεια* *unbelief*, it seems better to adhere to the same signification through the whole context. It is clear, however, that this learned critic did not approve the construction of the public version. Rosenmüller gives both interpretations.



placed in a situation from which there can be no hope of relief but from free and unmerited mercy.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 31.

*For God hath included all' together in unbelief, that all might be objects of mercy.*

32.

Such was the plan of the all-wise providence of God. It was his will to hide pride from man, and that all should know that the invaluable privileges of the gospel covenant, and the promise of eternal life, were not the reward of human merit, but the free gift of abounding mercy. And to this end he permitted both Jew and Gentile to fall into a state of ignorance, and vice, and misery, from which nothing could extricate them but the arm of unbounded mercy. All, through unbelief, are become prisoners of his justice; that all might be, and might be made sensible that they were, the objects of his mercy: to which, and not to their own antecedent merits, they are wholly indebted for the blessings of the gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hath included all, &c.*] *συνελάβετε*, “has locked them up together.” Taylor. See Luke v. 6; Gal. iii. 22, 23, “God has put up together in a state of revolt from their allegiance to him, all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that through his mercy they might all, both Jews and Gentiles, come to be his people: i. e. he has suffered both Jews and Gentiles in their turns not to be his people, that he might bring the whole body both of Jews and Gentiles to be his people.” Locke. To which may be added, what neither of these great critics appears to have sufficiently attended to, viz. that the main design of these dispensations is, that the whole might be, and might appear, and be acknowledged to be, an act of mercy, and not the reward of merit.

Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor, in their very judicious notes upon this passage, have shown that the apostle in the whole of this discourse, is treating of national privileges, and not of personal character.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 32.

8. The apostle bursts out in an eloquent apostrophe, upon the unsearchable wisdom of the divine counsels, challenging any one to advance any just claim upon his administration, and ascribing glory to the great all-comprehending mind; and thus he concludes his present subject and the argumentative part of his epistle, ch. 33—36.

33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways not to be traced<sup>1</sup>!*

Upon the review of the conduct of divine providence towards Jews and Gentiles, at one time selecting, and at another time rejecting, each of these great portions of mankind as the objects of peculiar favour, while we admit with the fullest assurance of conviction the infinite wisdom of the divine government, we are constrained to acknowledge our total ignorance of the reasons of the divine conduct, and our utter incapacity to explain why privileges are granted at one time and denied at another, or why they are communicated to some and withheld from others.

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<sup>1</sup> *O the depth, &c.*] Mr. Locke justly observes, that “this emphatical conclusion seems in a special manner to regard the Jews; whom the apostle would hereby teach modesty and submission to the over-ruling hand of the all-wise God, whom they are very unfit to call to account for his rejecting them, and dealing so favourably with the Gentiles. His wisdom and ways are infinitely above their comprehension; and will they take upon them to advise him what to do? Or is God in their debt? This is a very strong rebuke to the Jews; but delivered, as we see, in a way very gentle and inoffensive.”

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ?* Ch. XI. Ver. 34.

Who among the sons of men can pretend to understand or to explain the reasons of the divine conduct in every particular ? though, as I have already shown, some general explanation may perhaps be given. But who is there that will pretend to form a true judgement of the divine dispensations, from beginning to end, and to exhibit them in so clear and satisfactory a light that it may appear as if he had even suggested the plan to the Supreme Being ?

*Or who has first given to him, and it shall be paid him again ?* 35.

Who can say that his Maker is his debtor ? let him make out his claim, and full payment shall be made.

The apostle alludes to the folly and presumption of the Jews ; who fondly dreamed that they had an hereditary and indefeasible right to privileges superior to those of the Gentiles, whom they despised and hated ; and of whose equality to them in the divine favour, and in a covenant state, they could not endure to hear. *q. d.* If the Jews have sustained any injury, let them make out their case, and it shall be redressed. If their Maker is their debtor, let them produce the account, and it shall be discharged. But what can equal the folly and presumption of those who, either directly or by implication, advance so extravagant a claim ?

*For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things : to him be glory for ever. Amen.* 36.

Ch. XI.  
Ver. 36.

The unreasonableness of the supposition that a poor helpless dependent creature can lay his Creator under obligation is most manifest, if we recollect that the universal plan of the providential and moral government of God originates in his own infinite wisdom and benevolence ; that it must therefore be perfect in its conception ; that it is carried into effect by his almighty power : it cannot, therefore, be defective in the execution. And, whatever judgement frail and erring mortals may pass on the minute and detached portions which fall under their notice, it cannot be doubted, that when the glorious scheme is complete it will appear most worthy of the divine perfections, and productive of the greatest possible sum of virtue and happiness : so that the great Maker of all will have no cause to disavow his work, or to complain that in any particular it has fallen short of his magnificent design. And for this glorious scheme let his matchless wisdom, power, and goodness, be for ever admired and celebrated by all his creatures. Amen.

THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE  
TO THE ROMANS, CONTAINING  
PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS.

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THE APOSTLE HAVING FINISHED THE *DOCTRINAL*  
AND *ARGUMENTATIVE* PART OF THE EPISTLE,  
THE REMAINDER CHIEFLY CONSISTS OF *PRACTICAL*  
*EXHORTATIONS AND ADVICES.* Ch. xii.  
*to the end of the Epistle.*

FIRST, The apostle exhorts believers, in consideration of their free admission to the privileges of the gospel, to adorn their profession by the practice of Christian virtue, and by a faithful performance of the duties of their respective stations in the church, *ch. xii. throughout.* SECONDLY, Upon Christian principles he urges the practice of all civil and social duties, *ch. xiii. throughout.* THIRDLY, He recommends mutual candour to those who differ upon things indifferent; and particularly to those who held different opinions concerning the holiness of days and distinctions of food, *ch. xiv.—xv. 13.* FOURTHLY, He apologizes for his freedom; relates his success; and expresses his intention of visiting Rome in his way to Spain, after having finished his mission at Jerusalem; requests their prayers, and adds his blessing, *ch. xv. 13 to the end.* FIFTHLY,

The epistle concludes with many salutations, the usual benediction, and a doxology, *ch. xvi. throughout.*

## SECTION I.

Ch. XII. *The apostle urges upon the Christians at Rome, the regular and diligent practice of Christian duty, from the consideration of the great mercy of God in admitting them to the privileges of the gospel. Ch. xii.*

1. He exhorts them to make an entire surrender of themselves to God, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God<sup>1</sup>, that ye present yourselves<sup>2</sup> a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your rational service.*

*q. d.* You cannot but be deeply apprehensive of the great mercy and compassion of God in communicating the gospel to you, and in admitting you to a participation of its privileges upon such easy and merciful conditions: I entreat you, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> *Mercies of God.*] “Οικτιρμῶν, insignia illa beneficia quæ misericordiæ Dei debemus.” Rosenmüller. “these compassionate kindnesses.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *Present yourselves.*] Gr. “your bodies;” i. e. your whole persons.—*A living sacrifice:* i. e. in contradistinction to a dead victim.—*Holy.* “Sanctum in lege dicitur quicquid Deo oblatum est: quod vero sine vitio esse debebat. Lev. i. 3, 10.” Rosenmüller.—*Rational service.* “Opponitur ritibus et ceremoniis.” Rosenmüller.—“Sacrificium mente animoque offerendum. Oppositum ὕψιστα ζωῶν ἀλλοτρίων.” Koppius.—“That religious service of reason which ye owe.” Wakefield.

my beloved brethren, and, as a joint-partaker with you in the blessings of the gospel, I implore you to make a suitable return to the divine goodness. Animal sacrifices are no longer required: the death of a victim is not enjoined. But there is one sacrifice which may still be presented: it is that of your living selves: it is the consecration of your whole persons to God; and that for the performance, not of a ceremonial, but an intellectual worship. And under the new dispensation assure yourselves that this service of reason, this consecration of your whole life to God and duty, will alone be acceptable to a Being of perfect moral rectitude.

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 1.

2. The apostle exhorts them to a behaviour agreeable to their profession, and not according to the fashion of the world, ver. 2.

*And be not fashioned according to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind<sup>a</sup>, so that ye may exhibit in yourselves that will of God which is good, and acceptable, and perfect.* 2.

No longer act as the heathen do, whose immoralities I have faithfully pourtrayed. But, having entered into a new profession, consider yourselves

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<sup>a</sup> *Be ye transformed.*] “*Sed aliam personam induite emendatione animi vestri.*” Rosenmuller.—*That ye may exhibit:* δοκιμαζειν “show in yourselves.” Wakefield.—“*Ut exploretis (et probetis) quid Deus velit (a vobis fieri).*” Rosenmuller. “that ye may search out.” Newcome.—*That will of God.* “*Post Deū ponendum esse videtur comma.*” Rosenmuller.—“*τὸ ἀγαθόν, rectum, honestum, τέλειον, laus carens, perfectum, quod omnes suas partes habet.*” Rosenmuller.—Dr. Taylor understands this verse as addressed to the heathen, and the former to the Jews.

Ch. XII. as new persons, and let your mind be disciplined  
Ver. 2. to its new and holy state : so will you experience in  
yourselves, and exhibit to others, the will of God.  
You will be living patterns of what God requires ;  
namely, a conduct right in itself and flowing from  
good principles, well-pleasing to God and man, and  
consistent throughout, without any allowed deviation  
from the practice of virtue.

3. The apostle charges the believers at Rome not  
to be too much elated by their privileges, but to act  
as becomes them in their respective stations, ver.  
3—5.

3. *For by the favour<sup>1</sup> granted to me, I charge  
every one among you not to be elated above what  
he ought to think ; but to think with moderation,  
according to the measure of faith which God has  
distributed to each.*

And to enforce this exhortation more especially  
upon the Gentile believers, in virtue of my aposto-

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<sup>1</sup> Favour.] “*χαρις, munus apostolicum.*” Rosenmuller. See  
Rom. i. 5, xv. 15 ; 1 Cor. iii. 10 ; Eph. iii. 8.—“*μη υπερβουλειν,  
ne quis superbiat, vel immodeste de se sentiat.*” Rosenmuller.—  
“*πιστως, uti Deus cuivis mensuram aliquam scientiæ tribuit.*”  
Id. This appears to me to be the true meaning of *πιστως* in this  
connexion : christian knowledge. Dr. Taylor and Mr. Locke  
suppose an allusion to miraculous gifts ; but it does not appear  
that the Roman believers as yet possessed any ; for the apostle,  
ch. i. 11, expresses a wish to visit them, for the express pur-  
pose of imparting some spiritual gift to them. But we know,  
from chap. xiv., that the believers at Rome consisted both of  
Jews and Gentiles ; and that the latter, having no regard to dis-  
tinctions of days or of food, were disposed to treat the more  
scrupulous Jewish believer with contempt. This seems to be  
the spirit to which the apostle here alludes.



lie office, I strictly charge you all, without exception, and those in particular who may possess more extensive and correct ideas of gospel liberty than others, not to be too much elated by their superiority over their less informed brethren; but let them remember, that if their own faith is more correct, and their own views more enlarged, than those of their brethren, they are indebted for this advantage, not to their own merit, but to the gift of God.

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 3.

*For as in one body we have many members, but all these members have not the same office: so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and each of us severally fellow members thereof<sup>2</sup>.*

4.

5.

Let not the enlightened Gentile convert despise his over-scrupulous Jewish brother, who may not be altogether emancipated from the bondage of the law. For in your respective stations you are all incorporated in the Christian church, and are members of the mystical body of Christ, which would not be complete if any individual were wanting. Being thus intimately united to him as your common Head, far from despising each other, you should cultivate kind affections and mutual sympathy.

#### 4. The apostle directs to an active and faithful

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<sup>2</sup> *Each of us severally.*] So Wakefield. This image of the Christian church as a body, of which individuals and particular churches are severally members, and Christ the Head, from which life and sense and vigour are dispensed to the whole, is a great favourite with the apostle, who introduces it and argues upon it in many of his epistles. See 1 Cor. xii. 12; Eph. iv. 25, v. 30.

Ch. XII. discharge of their respective offices in the church, ver. 6—8.

Ver. 6. *Having therefore different gifts according to the favour granted to us<sup>1</sup>, if it be prophecy, let us prophesy agreeably to the analogy of faith<sup>2</sup>.*

Each of us being members of Christ's mystical body, let each keep the place and perform the office belonging to it. In our respective stations in the church some are better qualified for one office, and some for another: one has a peculiar talent for public preaching, and is perhaps appointed to the office of a presbyter. Let him then in this way edify the church: only let him adhere to the rule of faith,

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<sup>1</sup> *The favour granted.*] *κατα την χάριν την δοθεισαν.* This is a repetition of the phrase used in ver. 3, where it unquestionably expresses the apostle's appointment to his apostolic office. It is probably used in a similar sense here, and might perhaps be more intelligibly translated, "having therefore different duties or qualifications" (*χαρίσματα*, in allusion to *χάρις*), "according to the office assigned to us," &c. He then goes into detail of preachers, deacons, catechists, almoners, &c. This seems to be the true meaning of the passage, though it has almost escaped the notice of the commentators.

<sup>2</sup> *Let us prophesy.*] "If to explain the scriptures, let it be agreeable to the faith." Wakefield. If the Roman believers were not endowed with spiritual gifts, this lowest sense of the word prophecy is that in which it is to be understood in this passage. "Prophecy," says Dr. Priestley, in his note upon the text, "often signifies exhortation; and indeed nothing that the apostle says in the course of this epistle implies that the Christians at Rome had as yet received any miraculous gift of the spirit, nor does it appear that any apostle had been there to impart them; and it was by the imposition of their hands that those gifts were ordinarily communicated. In this manner it pleased God to distinguish the twelve apostles." Perhaps *προφητεία* may be used to express the office of the presbyter or bishop, as the next exhortation relates to the office of deacon. "*πιστις, est scientia ut,* ver. 3." Rosenmuller.

and interpret the scripture consistently with the Ch. XII. doctrine of Christ, as far as his knowledge extends.

*Or if the office of a deacon, let us attend to the* Ver. 7.  
*deaconship.*

If we are placed in a lower situation in the church, and our office is to supply the tables of the poor, let this work be done faithfully and impartially. See Acts vi.

*The instructor also to instruction, the exhorter* 8.  
*to exhortation.*

Let him whose office it is to teach the young and the uninformed, be diligent in his work, and acquire the happy talent of communicating knowledge in the most agreeable manner; and let him whose province it is to exhort or to console, acquire a familiar acquaintance with the most powerful motives to duty and the most efficacious topics of consolation, and urge them at the most convenient seasons and in the most impressive manner.

*He that distributeth, let him distribute with sim-* — 8.  
*plicity*<sup>3</sup>; *he that presideth, with diligence*<sup>4</sup>; *he that*  
*showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

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<sup>3</sup> *Distributeth.*] It is commonly believed that the apostle is here speaking of private charity, but he probably continues to address his advice to the officers of the church. See Taylor and Schleusner. Dr Taylor supposes that the deacons are addressed; but they have been mentioned before. Perhaps the distinction may be, that the deacons were to attend to the secular concerns of the church, and to the poor members of the community; and the distributors, or almoners, to the external poor.—ἀπλοῦς in this connexion, impartiality, as well as liberality. “with an honest and disinterested mind.” Taylor.

<sup>4</sup> *He who presideth.*] ὁ προϊστάμενος. The sense given in the paraphrase is adopted by Dr. Taylor from Lord Barrington's

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 8.

Let him who is appointed to distribute the alms of the church to strangers, or to the poor, distribute with an impartial hand. Let those who preside over charitable distributions, or who undertake to patronise or provide for the persecuted brethren, perform their duties with attention and zeal. And let such as are engaged in offices of humanity to the sick and afflicted, discharge the necessary and painful duties of their station with that ready and cheerful spirit which doubles the blessing to the sufferer, and exhibits in the most engaging manner the excellence and efficacy of the principles of the gospel.

5. The apostle recommends mutual affection, humility, diligence, and zeal, ver. 9—11.

9. *Let love be undissembled. Abhor evil; adhere to goodness*<sup>1</sup>.

The profession of the gospel requires fraternal affection among the followers of Jesus. Let that affection be sincere. Abhor all malignity and mischief; and cherish in your hearts the kindest and best affections.

10. *Be tenderly affectionate one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.*

Let your affection to each other resemble that of

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*Misc. Sac.* Essay I. It is confirmed by the use of the word *πρῶτος*, Rom. xvi. 2. Phebe, a deaconess, is spoken of as a succourer of many.

<sup>1</sup> *Abhor*, &c.] Gr. “abhorring—cleaving:” a Hebraism, familiar to the apostle.

the nearest kindred; and do not individually and eagerly affect pre-eminence, but readily give place to others who may have a better claim.

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 10.

*Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit; availing yourselves of opportunity*<sup>2</sup>. 11.

Whatever business you undertake, perform it thoroughly and with dispatch. Be always on the alert: ready for action. And whatever be the duty of the present hour apply to it; and let no temptation divert you from it.

6. The apostle exhorts to the practice of various duties, and particularly recommends such as were adapted to a suffering state, ver. 12, 13.

*Rejoice in hope*<sup>3</sup>! 12.

Many of you are sufferers in one shape or another for your faith in the gospel. Let that hope which the gospel inspires cheer your spirits.

*Be patient in tribulation.*

Animated by such glorious prospects, bear present trials, however severe, without murmuring or dejection.

*Persevere in prayer.*

Look up to God: pour out your heart before him: cast your care upon him.

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<sup>2</sup> *Availing yourselves, &c.*] τῷ καιρῷ δουλοῦντας: "serving yourselves of the opportunity." Wokefield. This is the reading of the Clermont and other manuscripts: it is adopted by Griesbach, and best suits the connexion. The Alexandrine, Vatican, and many other copies read Κυρίῳ, "serving the Lord," which is the Received Text.

<sup>3</sup> *Rejoice in hope*] "Si res adversæ ingruunt, Christiani debent memores esse se non carere spe." Rosenmüller.

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 13.

*Communicate to the wants of the saints* <sup>1</sup>.

Be liberal in your benefactions to your indigent brethren.

*Pursue hospitality* <sup>2</sup>.

Be kind to strangers, and especially to believers who, being persecuted at home on account of their Christian profession, may find it difficult to obtain admission into the houses of those who were formerly their friends. Look out for such, and do not wait till they come to your door : search for them in the places of public resort ; bring them to your houses, and entertain them in the best way that prudence will admit.

7. The apostle recommends good will to persecutors, sympathy, humility, and self-diffidence, ver. 14—16.

14. *Bless those who persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

Let not any provocation, nor any injury which you may receive on account of your Christian profession, induce you to retaliate upon your persecutors: but speak mildly, even to those whose language and conduct are most malignant.

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<sup>1</sup> *Wants of the saints.*] Rosenmuller observes, that this epistle was written about the time of the famine in the reign of Claudius, Acts xi. 28, when many strangers flocked to Rome.

<sup>2</sup> *Pursue hospitality.*] *διωκετε*, seek occasions for hospitality. Hospitality was a virtue of great importance, when the want of inns rendered it difficult for strangers to obtain accommodations. And Dr. Doddridge observes, after Blackwall, that many Christians might be banished their native country for their religion, and perhaps laid under a ban of excommunication ; which would render it a high crime to receive them into their houses.

*Rejoice with them that rejoice ; weep with them that weep : having the same dispositions towards each other<sup>a</sup>.* Ch. XII. Ver. 15, 16.

Sympathize with each other : avoid a narrow selfish spirit. Enter into the cases of your brethren. If they are cheerful, rejoice with them ; if they mourn, participate in their sorrows. Let every one feel for another as for himself.

*Affect not superiority, but be guided by the humble<sup>b</sup>. Be not wise in your own conceit.*

Know your proper place : do not set yourselves up above your brethren, but be willing to yield pre-eminence to others. Take for your examples those who are of a humble spirit, who rather decline than covet distinction. Be not puffed up with the conceit of superior wisdom.

8. The apostle warns against revenge, and enjoins honourable and peaceful behaviour, ver. 17, 18.

*Render to no one evil for evil.*

17.

The spirit of the gospel prohibits all retaliation and revenge.

*Be commendably prudent in the sight of all men<sup>b</sup>.*

<sup>a</sup> I follow Wakefield in joining this clause to the 15th verse, and borrow his translation.

<sup>b</sup> *Affect not, &c.*] *φρονεῖν τὰ ὑψηλὰ, malo sensu est, velle semper antecellere alios. Οἱ ταπεινοὶ h. l. non sunt vitæ statui, sed mente humiles. συναπαρτῆσθαι τινι, aliis, in partem ministrum dicitur. Sed Paulus usus est hoc verbo in meliorem partem. Ducamini exemplo demissorum.* Rosenmüller. "Be guided by humility." Wakefield.

<sup>b</sup> *Be commendably prudent.*] *ε. προσεσιθῆς καλῶς.* I follow

Ch. XII. Let your conduct in the world be so governed by  
Ver. 17. prudence, as to entitle you to respect, and to guard you from reproach.

18. *If it be possible, to the utmost of your power, live peaceably with all men.*

Offer no provocation to any; give no intentional offence; be circumspect in your conduct: do all you can to promote peace and quietness. After all, peace may not be in your power; but let not the blame of contention rest with you.

9. The section concludes with an earnest dissuasive from revenge, ver. 19—21.

19. *Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but yield to anger<sup>1</sup>; for it is written, Vengeance belongeth to me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.*

Though you have an unquestionable right to stand upon self-defence, yet if a man is violently angry it will be advisable not to increase his irritation by fruitless opposition, but to leave his fury to exhaust itself in empty words. And if he should even proceed to mischief, and should commit injury, do not retaliate evil: for no one can be an impartial judge in his own cause. If you have no just means

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Rosenmuller, who, with More, interprets *καλα* as the adverb *καλως*: q. d. “*coram omnibus hominibus vivite caute. Ut formula prospicere bene, describat hominem providum, prudentem, cautumque.*” 2 Cor. viii. 21.”

<sup>1</sup> *Yield to anger:*] i. e. as some explain it, “give place to, make way for, the anger of God.” So Chrysostom understands it; and Rosenmuller says that the connexion requires this sense. So Archbishop Newcome: see his note. Mr. Wakefield renders it “the anger *of another* :” which is the sense that I prefer.



of redress, commit your cause to God. He claims this prerogative as his own: 'To me (saith he) belongeth vengeance and recompense.' Deut. xxxii. 35. And in due time he will call the offender to account.

Ch. XII.  
Ver. 19.

*Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for by doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head<sup>2</sup>. Be not overcome by evil<sup>3</sup>, but overcome evil with good.*

20.

21.

In the mean time, endeavour by forbearance and kindness to bring your adversary to repentance, and to save him from ruin. Not only abstain from all acts of revenge, but abound in those of benevolence; relieve his sufferings, supply his wants, anticipate his application. If his heart is not unusually hard, this conduct will soften him, and bring him to a better temper. In the best sense of the words, you will heap coals of fire upon his head; you will melt

<sup>2</sup> *Coals of fire, &c.*] This sentence is a quotation from Prov. xxv. 22, where it is added, 'and the Lord shall reward thee.' *Id si feveris dolorem ipsi injicies maximum.* As some understand it, 'you will fill him with remorse.' According to others, 'you will aggravate his final condemnation.' See Rosenmüller. But this latter surely is a very unworthy motive, and by no means likely to have been the intention of the apostle. The sense given in the paraphrase is most agreeable to the spirit of Christianity, and therefore most probably the true meaning of the passage. See Doddridge *in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> *Overcome by evil.*] "This," says Dr. Priestley in his note on this text, "is a very happy expression. By calling *doing evil a being overcome of evil*, implies a weakness of mind in giving way to it, and that doing good is a conquest over evil principles: so that there is great heroism and magnanimity in virtue, and as great weakness and meanness in vice."

Ch. XII. him into penitence, and cast his mind into a new  
Ver. 21. mould.

Upon the whole, suffer not evil affections to be excited in you by the bad conduct of others; but subdue the evil passions of others by your own gentleness, forbearance, and generosity.

## SECTION II.

Ch. XIII. *The apostle inculcates the practice of all civil and social duties upon Christian principles.* Ch. xiii.

1. The apostle strongly presses the duty of obedience to the civil power, ver. 1—5.

Ver. 1. *Let every one be subject to the supreme authorities. For there is no authority but from God, and*  
2. *those which exist are appointed by God; he, therefore, who setteth himself against this authority, resisteth the appointment of God; and they who resist will bring upon themselves condemnation.*

The Jews regarded themselves as living under a theocracy, or a special divine government, acknowledging no law but that which was given by God to Moses upon mount Sinai, and owing allegiance to no sovereign but God himself. Hence they held all other governments in contempt and detestation. And not only were they impatient of the Roman yoke in their own country, but were prone to sedition in other nations where they were settled. They had been expelled from Rome for their turbulent

spirit by the emperor Claudius, a few years before this epistle was written, and had but lately been permitted to return. The believers in Christ, who originally consisted chiefly of Jewish converts, were for some time confounded with the Jews, and some of them might be disposed to embrace the Jewish principles of civil government, and to conclude, that by their conversion to the faith they were released from all subjection to the civil power, and that they owed no allegiance but to God. It is to rectify this misconception that the apostle gives the advice contained in this portion of his epistle<sup>1</sup>.

Ch. XIII.  
Ver. 2.

*Let every one be subject to the supreme authorities*<sup>2</sup>; and let none of the holy community of believers in Christ imagine, that by taking upon himself this sacred profession, he is released from the allegiance which he owes to the civil power: but let all obey the sovereign authority. 1.

*For there is no authority but from God; and those which exist*<sup>3</sup> *are appointed by God.* —1.

It is a mistake to suppose that Moses is the only divinely commissioned legislator, and that the Jew-

<sup>1</sup> “*Hanc doctrinam, Imperatoribus non esse præbendum obsequium, Judæi sine dubio hauserunt e doctrina Phariseorum.* Joseph. Antiq. xviii. 2, 4.” Rosenmuller.

<sup>2</sup> *Supreme authorities.*] “*intelligendis sunt summi magistratus in universum: ac imprimis Imperatores Romani. Nam ὑπερταύτων dignitatis quandam præstantiam præ aliis indicat.* Joseph. B. I. vii. II. i.” Rosenmuller. The supreme imperial power.

<sup>3</sup> *Those which exist.*] In the received text “the authorities” which exist; but the word authorities (ἐξουσίαι) is omitted in the Alexandrine, Cambridge, and other manuscripts, and by Griesbach.—*Are appointed by God.* “All other governments derive their power from God as well as the Jews.” Locke.

Ch. XIII.  
Ver. 1.

ish government is the only one which derives its authority from heaven. There is a sense in which civil government, as such, is derived from God; because it is for the happiness of mankind to form themselves into civil communities for mutual protection and security: and therefore it is the will of God that such communities should exist. And there is also a sense in which the actually existing governments are of divine appointment; because, in their different forms, they have for wise and good reasons been permitted to establish themselves in the world; and so they are to remain, unless very substantial reasons require a change.

2. *He, therefore, who setteth himself against this authority, resisteth the appointment of God<sup>1</sup>; and they who resist, will bring upon themselves condemnation<sup>2</sup>.*

He who resisteth lawful authority, and who would introduce anarchy and confusion, opposes an institution which God has appointed for the benefit of

<sup>1</sup> *He who setteth himself, &c.]* So Wakefield. “*αντιτασσεσθαι, per vim se opponere. Quicumque se opponit regi, idem est ut si se opponeret majestati divinæ.*” Rosenmüller.—“The sense is, that Christians, by being Christians, are not any way exempt from obedience to the civil magistrate, nor ought by any means to resist them; though, by what is said, ver. 3, it seems that St. Paul meant here, magistrates having and exercising a lawful power. But whether the magistrates in being, were, or were not such, and consequently were, or were not to be obeyed, *that*, Christianity gave them no peculiar power to examine. They had the common right of others, their fellow citizens, but had no distinct privileges as Christians.” Locke.

<sup>2</sup> *[Condemnation.]* “They who resist, will be punished by those powers which they resist.” Locke. “*Punientur tum a magistratibus, tum, alia ratione, a Deo ipso.*” Rosenmüller.

mankind. And he who opposes the existing authorities, and endeavours to overthrow them under any pretext whatever, incurs a most serious responsibility: for he opposes that which God in his providence has permitted to exist; and of which he wills the continuance, till the evils which result from its existence exceed those which will follow from its overthrow. And they who thus resist the civil power, must of course expect the vengeance of the penal laws; and if they oppose it wantonly, inconsiderately, and unjustly, they will incur the displeasure of heaven.

The apostle does not mean to affirm, that all resistance to tyrannical authority is in all cases unlawful. God forbid. That would be the extreme of injustice. Nor does the apostle's argument warrant such a conclusion. All evil is in some sense of divine appointment; and it is no more unlawful to put an end to a tyrannical and oppressive government, because such a government is, in the course of providence, permitted to exist, than it is unlawful to use every possible means to put a stop to the pestilence; because that likewise is an evil under the direction of God. And, in fact, a reformed government when once introduced and settled, is as much the appointment of God, as that which has been displaced by it. But it was no part of the apostle's intention, nor was it the object of his mission, to enter into political discussions.

*For these rulers<sup>3</sup> are not a terror to good works,* 3.

<sup>3</sup> These rulers.] Οἱ ῥαρχαὶ. So Wakefield. Are not a

- Ch. XIII. *but to evil: wouldest thou then not be afraid of the*  
 Ver. 3. *authority? do that which is right, and thou wilt*  
 4. *be praised by it; for it is the minister of God to*  
*thee for good.*

The rulers to whom I allude, and whom it would be impious to resist, are such as perform their important duties with fidelity; who protect the virtuous, but are a terror to evil-doers. If, therefore, you would avoid the frowns of those who are in power, perform your duty, and the power of the virtuous magistrate will be your protection: for such is the design of providence in the appointment of civil institutions.

- 4. *But if thou do evil, be afraid; for it beareth not the sword in vain*<sup>1</sup>; *for it is the avenging minister of God for the punishment of the evil-doer.*

If, indeed, you violate the laws of the community, if you deceive, oppress, and injure your neigh-

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*terror, &c.* It may seem surprising, that the apostle speaks so respectfully of Nero's government. And some have argued from this fact, the disgraceful and degrading doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance, even under the most tyrannical and arbitrary governments. But this epistle was written in the third or fourth year of Nero's reign; and it is to be remembered, that the government of this emperor for the first few years was temperate and just. When Paul was himself a prisoner at Rome, there were believers even in Cesar's household, Philip. iv. 22. And Burrhus, the preceptor of Nero, and prefect of the Prætorian guard, is said to have favoured the Christians.—*It is the minister.* So Wakefield.

<sup>1</sup> *It beareth not the sword, &c.]* This expression seems to imply, that in extreme cases, the civil magistrate has a right to take away life. But surely this authority should be very sparingly used. Wilful murder seems to be almost the only offence which will justify capital punishment.—*It is, &c. for the punishment.* So Wakefield.

bour, you have reason to be afraid ; for a just magistrate will do his duty, and will use his authority for visiting the wicked with condign punishment. For he is as much the instrument of God to execute his righteous judgement upon the wicked, as to protect and reward the virtuous.

Ch. XIII.  
Ver. 4.

*Therefore, it is necessary to yield subjection, not only on account of punishment<sup>2</sup>, but also for conscience sake.* 5.

Upon the whole, therefore, it behoves you to live in due subjection to a just government, not only through fear of punishment, but from a sense of duty, and from obedience to the will of God.

2. The apostle exhorts to a conscientious discharge of what was due to the established government, ver. 6, 7.

*Moreover, for the same reason, pay tribute likewise; for they are servants of God, continually attending to this particular object<sup>3</sup>.* 6.

Be as strictly conscientious in the payment of your proportion of the public contributions, as in performing your civil and social duties. Magistrates are the servants of God ; whose duty it is, to devote their whole time and all their powers to the

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<sup>2</sup> On account of punishment.] δια τῆς οργῆς. Wakefield. Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> Attending.] " They employ their care, time, and pains, for the public weal." Locke. " A very delicate lesson is obliquely conveyed to the magistrate," ver. 3, 4, 6. Newcome. " for they who attend to this business, are public servants of God." Wakefield.

Ch. XIII. service of the public, to administer justice, and to  
Ver. 6. preserve peace. They are fully entitled to ample remuneration from the public purse. To defraud them, therefore, of their just dues, is an act of dishonesty, and will be visited as such by the just judgement of God, who will protect the rights of his faithful servants.

7. *Therefore, render to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom<sup>1</sup>; reverence, to whom reverence; honour, to whom honour<sup>2</sup>.*

Pay, therefore, to every individual the respect which is due to him. Pay taxes and customs to those who have a right to demand, and are appointed to receive them. Let those who are in power be respected and obeyed. Let superiors in age or office, who adorn their stations by their virtues, be honoured as they deserve. And let not the Christian religion be reproached as tending to dissolve the bonds of society.

Upon the whole, we may remark with how much prudence and caution the apostle urges his exhortations upon the subject of political obligations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tribute—custom.*] “Ὁ φόρος tributum denotat quod personis imponitur—το τέλος, vectigal, quod pro mercium transportatione solvitur.” Rosenmuller. Doddridge well observes, that this passage is directly levelled at a favourite notion of the Jews; that, as the peculiar people of God, they were exempted from obligation to pay tribute to the Gentiles, though without pointing them out in an invidious manner.

<sup>2</sup> *Reverence—honour.*] “φδοῖς, reverence, expresses the inward disposition, see Eph. v. ult. τιμή, honour, expresses the conduct and external behaviour proceeding from it.” Doddridge.



While he strongly inculcates the duties of subjects, CH. XIII.  
Ver. 7. he indirectly, but clearly and pointedly, lays down the duties of magistrates; and though he says nothing concerning the lawfulness of resistance to a tyrannical power, his arguments for obedience only apply to the civil authority when it is exercised for the benefit of the community, and fulfills the purposes for which it was instituted<sup>3</sup>.

3. The apostle recommends universal good will as the sum of social virtue, ver. 8—10.

*Owe nothing to any man but mutual love; for he who loveth his neighbour<sup>4</sup> hath fully performed the law.*

8.

Incur no debts; for they will entangle and distress you. But to this injunction let there be one exception. Regard benevolence, and a constant disposition to perform kind offices, as a debt owing to all mankind. Universal benevolence is a pre-

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<sup>3</sup> "The apostle, without entering into any question about the lawfulness of government, or, in what cases it was lawful, and in what unlawful [to resist], considered it as the duty of Christians to submit to that government which they found established. He represents the government they were under, as that to which God had thought proper to subject them, and in which they ought to acquiesce. These maxims, therefore, are to be considered as applying to the particular circumstances of the times in which the apostle wrote, and it is absurd to plead them in favour of a government manifestly unjust and tyrannical, from which it is in the power of the people to relieve themselves." Dr. Priestley.

<sup>4</sup> *Loveth his neighbour.*] So Wakefield; and this is the true sense of the passage. Literally, "the other," or "another," which in the English idiom takes away the universality of the rule.

Ch. XIII. cept of indispensable obligation under the Chris-  
 Ver. 8. tian law. And it is the whole of Christian duty.  
 For he, who truly loves his neighbour, will not fail  
 to perform every act of social virtue.

9. *For that commandment, Thou shalt not com-  
 mit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not  
 steal<sup>1</sup>, Thou shalt not covet, and every other com-  
 mandment, is summed up in this one, Thou shalt*
10. *love thy neighbour as thyself. Love doeth no ill  
 to its neighbour ; therefore, love is the fulfilling of  
 the law.*

The law of the second table consists chiefly of prohibitions of injustice. And all its precepts, whether negative or positive, are comprehended in the single rule, Love your neighbour as yourself ; or, in other words, Always do to others, what, in an exchange of circumstances, you might reasonably desire that others should do to you. Acting upon this principle, you will infallibly steer clear of all injustice ; and will, in fact, abound in acts of benevolence. So true it is, that Love, and that alone, is the complete accomplishment of social duty, and of obedience to the law of God, both in the letter and the spirit.

4. The apostle enforces these duties from the consideration of the brevity of human life, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Thou shalt not steal.*] The received texts adds, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." But these words are wanting in the oldest and best manuscripts, and Griesbach has excluded them from his text.

the excellence of Christian privileges, ver. 11— Ch. XIII.  
14.

*And this let us do, considering the season, that* Ver. 11.  
*it is now time for us to arise from sleep; for our*  
*salvation<sup>2</sup> is nearer now than when we first be-*  
*lieved. The night is far spent; and the day is* 12.  
*drawing near. Let us then lay aside the works*  
*of darkness, and put on the apparel<sup>3</sup> of light.*

<sup>2</sup> *Our salvation :* ] *i. e.* as is commonly understood, the second coming of Christ to raise the dead, and to reward the just; which was expected by the primitive believers, and probably by the apostles themselves, to take place in a very few years, (see 2 Thess. ii. 1,) and before the generation then existing became extinct. See Locke and Grotius *in loc.* But though the lapse of ages has demonstrated the vanity of this expectation, yet the argument holds good to every individual: for to every human being, the appearance of his Lord to judgement will succeed instantaneously to the moment of dissolution, though ages of ages should intervene. “Σωτηρία, salutis cognitio.” Rosenmüller; who explains the passage thus: *q. d.* We ought the rather to lay aside all indolence in the discharge of Christian duty, as our knowledge of the gospel is so much improved since we first professed the Christian faith. But this, which is also the interpretation of Macknight, seems a harsh interpretation. Dr. Taylor disapproves of Locke’s and Grotius’s supposition, that the apostle was mistaken in the time of our Lord’s appearance to judgement.

<sup>3</sup> *The apparel.*] “τα ἔσπλα, instrumenta, arma, sed et vestes.” Rosenmüller.—“The attire.” Newcome: see Beza and Wakefield.—“Observe,” says Dr. Taylor, “the lively and beautiful metaphor. This present imperfect state of trial, the apostle compares to the night. And the salvation and glory we all have in prospect, to the day. He supposes Christians may be asleep, negligent of their most important concerns, or immersed in sensuality. He, as the apostle of Christ and preacher of the gospel, knocks at the chamber door, and calls to them, ‘It is high time to awake out of sleep: the day appears, the glorious day of your everlasting salvation: Awake, awake; throw off your loose clothes, which cover you in the night, and in which it is unseemly to appear before men; and put on that comely dress which is agreeable to the day, and gives a decent and ho-

Ch. XIII.  
Ver. 12.

And let us be the more earnest in the discharge of duty, considering how short and precarious the opportunity is, which still remains. We have no time to lose. If we have hitherto been negligent and slothful, it becomes us now to rouse our spirits to activity and energy, and not to lose another hour. For the season of the accomplishment of our Christian hopes is rapidly advancing ; and is now nearer than when we first professed faith in Christ, though we were then told that it was near at hand. The judge is at the door ; the night of darkness and ignorance is past ; we cannot plead that we do not know our duty. Let us then no longer practise the vices of our heathen state, but let us act as professors of the pure religion of Jesus. Let us put off our night clothes by which we should be encumbered and disgraced, and put on the useful and ornamental apparel of the day.

13. *As being in the day<sup>1</sup>, let us walk gracefully, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*

The religion of Jesus is broad day-light ; it admits of no concealment. The disciple of Jesus is

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nourable appearance in the world.' Meaning that disposition and conversation which is agreeable to the gospel, lovely in the eyes of mankind, and which fits us to appear among the blessed in the realms of light."

<sup>1</sup> *As being in the day.*] "*ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ*, as in the day-time." Wakefield.—"Gracefully, becomingly." Newcome.—"*εὐσχημονως*, *qui decentem quandam inducunt personam*." Rosenmüller. "Let us walk honourably and gracefully : so *εὐσχημονως* exactly signifies. Dr. Milner renders it, Let us walk with a grace." Doddridge.—*Not in debauchery*, &c. "*Κοιτη*, *alias concubile*, *hic, concubitum denotat*." Rosenmüller.

to act in retirement, as if he were under constant inspection. Let us, therefore, at all times, and in all places, behave with the decorum which we should think necessary if we were under the public eye ; and let us ever shun those hateful vices, which even they who practise them are ashamed to avow, and endeavour to conceal under the darkness of the night.

Ch. XIII.  
Ver. 13.

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for irregular desires<sup>2</sup>.* 14.

Study the character of your master, Jesus Christ, and array yourselves in those virtues which shone so conspicuously in him ; this will be your most appropriate and most glorious dress ; this will secure universal esteem and affection. But as for those gross vices, which are so common among the idolatrous heathen, renounce them all together, as utterly inconsistent with the character of a disciple of Christ.

### SECTION III.

*The apostle recommends mutual candour to those who entertained differences of opinion concerning things indifferent, and particularly concerning the distinctions of meats and days. Ch. xiv. throughout.* Ch. XIV.

1. The apostle advises generally, that those who

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<sup>2</sup> Make no provision, &c.] “ *Et corporis curam agite sic, ut cupiditates non incenduntur.*” Rosenmüller.

CH. XIV. entertain scruples should be treated with indulgence by those who have none, ver. 1.

Ver. 1. *Moreover, receive kindly him who is weak in faith*<sup>1</sup>, *not censuring him because of his doubts*<sup>2</sup>.

The society of believers at Rome consisted of converts both from Jews and heathen. The Jewish Christians, still attached to the law of Moses, adhered scrupulously to all its distinctions concerning the lawfulness of different kinds of food, and the holiness of certain days. These the apostle

<sup>1</sup> *Him who is weak in faith.*] Rosenmuller observes, that faith here signifies not an assent to doctrine, but a persuasion concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a practice: one who is weak in faith, therefore, is one who is doubtful in points of practice. "Not fully persuaded," says Mr. Locke, "of his Christian liberty in the use of some indifferent thing."

<sup>2</sup> *Not censuring him because of his doubts.*] *μη εις διακρίσεις διαλογισμων* *q. d. ἐνεκα διαλογισμων*, not to vexatious censures because of his doubts. See Acts xi. 2. They of the circumcision contended with Peter, *διακρινοντο*, *q. d. angrily disputed with, and censured Peter.* See also Jude ver. 9. Mac-knight renders the words, "not in order to the strife of disputations."—"διακρινειν, *dijudicare*, Matt. xvi. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 5; διαλογισμοι, *cogitationes*, Matt. xv. 19, *q. d. ne in ipsius sententiam curiose inquiratis, eamque severe damnetis.*" Rosenmuller; who nevertheless adds, that others interpret the sense, *q. d. do not quarrel on account of opinions; others, q. d. ἀνευ διακρίσεως και διαλογισμου*, without doubting or disputing; but he prefers the first. "not unto doubts and reasonings." Wakefield; who reads *δια λογισμων* as two words. "Live together in a free and friendly manner, without any regard to the differences among you, about the lawfulness of any indifferent things." Locke. "Do not tease and disquiet them with grievous censures or vexatious disputes about their sentiments." Dr. Taylor; who remarks in his note, that the apostle, by "him that is weak in faith, means the Jew, who he knew assuredly was in the wrong; yet he uses him very tenderly, and avoids saying any thing of him that was harsh or overbearing."—"Not teasing him with controversies about things in doubt." Dr. Priestley.

calls "weak in faith." Not fully understanding the extent of Christian liberty; and making themselves uneasy with unfounded scruples. On the other hand, the Gentile believer, not having been accustomed to lay stress upon distinctions of this nature, felt no scruples upon the subject: all days, all kinds of food, were alike in his estimation. And these two classes of believers, as too frequently happens in similar circumstances, were disposed to entertain an ill opinion of each other. The Jew would not hold communion with the Gentile believer, the laxity of whose conduct in these particulars gave him a bad opinion of his character, and led him to conclude, that though he professed to believe in Christ, he was little better than a heathen. While the more enlightened, and free thinking Gentile, not making sufficient allowance for the early prepossessions of his Jewish brother, was disposed to look down upon him with contempt, as a weak and narrow-minded bigot. The apostle, who, most evidently, both here and elsewhere, decides the question in favour of the liberty of the Gentile believer, is, nevertheless, very anxious that the two parties should entertain their separate opinions, and observe their respective practices, in the exercise of mutual candour and good will. They were both influenced by the same motive, a desire to do credit to the doctrine which they professed; and therefore both were equally acceptable to God, and neither party was authorized to condemn the other. He therefore strictly enjoins the Jewish believer, not to anathematize the Gen-

Ch. XIV.

Ver. 1.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 1.

tile professor ; and the Gentile believer, not to despise and insult his Jewish brother ; and requires, that while each follows his own judgement each should allow his neighbour to do the like in all cases of mere ritual institution, which did not interfere with the great law of moral rectitude. The Gentile brethren appear to have been the more numerous party, and he begins with them, *q. d.* I have been exhorting you to mutual benevolence. Let it particularly appear in this case. Kindly entertain your less informed brother ; bear with his long established prepossessions, and do not wound his spirit, and irritate his feelings, by treating his conscientious scruples with levity and contempt.

2. The apostle states the specific cases in which the parties differed, and enjoins mutual forbearance, ver. 2—6.

2. *For one believeth that he may eat any kind of food ; another, who is weak, eateth only herbs.*

The Gentile believer, who has just conceptions of Christian liberty, pays no regard to ceremonial distinctions, but eats one kind of food as freely as another ; while the Jewish convert, still adhering to the engagements of the law, and fearful lest, in a heathen country, he should, notwithstanding all his care, expose himself to ceremonial pollution, judges it to be the safest course to abstain altogether from animal food, and confines himself wholly to a vegetable diet, with regard to which the law laid him under no restrictions.



*Let not him who eateth, despise him who eateth not ; and let not him who eateth not, condemn him who eateth : for God has accepted him.* CH. XIV.  
VER. 3.

Let not the Gentile believer, flushed with the possession of his liberty, treat his Jewish brother with contempt ; and view him as a weak and silly bigot, because of his conscientious scruples. Nor, on the other hand, let the scrupulous, and self-denying Jewish believer, denounce judgement upon the free thinking and free living Gentile Christian, as though he were insincere in his profession, and no better than a heathen ; for in this judgement he would be very much mistaken : for I have authority to assure him, that under the gospel covenant the heathen convert is admitted into favour, without subjecting himself to any of those ceremonial restraints, which, for wise reasons, were imposed upon the Israelites by the law of Moses.

*Who art thou that condemnest another man's domestic ? to his own master he standeth or falleth : but he shall be established ; for God is able to establish him.* 4.

How unbecoming is it in any one to interfere officiously in the domestic economy of another ; to condemn the servant for disobedience, when the master finds no fault ! Who then art thou that art thus passing sentence upon thy fellow servant ? what are thy claims, and where is thy commission to exclude from Christian fellowship all those who do not adopt thy ceremonial scruples ? You are not his judge ; let him answer for himself ; and await

Ch. XIV. the decision of him to whom alone he is amenable.

Ver. 4.

Nor need he fear an unfavourable sentence. Whatever your erroneous judgement may suspect or denounce, if, in these indifferent matters only, he is deficient, he shall maintain his character and station in the church, and shall be accepted in the end. For God is able and willing to support and establish him in the Christian faith without the observance of ceremonial institutions, as well as if he subjected himself to the burdensome yoke of the law.

5. *One man esteemeth one day above another : but another man esteemeth every day alike* <sup>1</sup>. *Let every one freely enjoy his own opinion* <sup>2</sup>.

The converted Jew observes his sabbaths, his new moons, his fasts, and his festivals. The Gentile believer, unaccustomed to sabbatical distinctions of every kind, regards all his time as equally appropriated to God, and does not esteem any one day as more holy than another. Be it so. Let every

<sup>1</sup> *Esteemeth every day alike.*] “Κρινει πασαν ημεραν, sc. ισχν. quemvis diem pariter sanctum habet : κρινει aestimat, ut 1 Cor. ii. 2.” Rosenmuller. See also Raphelius.

<sup>2</sup> *Let every one freely enjoy his own opinion :*] “πληροφρεϊσθω Πληρ. pleno motu in aliquid feror, et est navium, quæ plenius velis agitantur et in portum feruntur.” Schleusner. “Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment, and go on in his own way without impediment or censure.” Doddridge; who observes, in his note, “How strong a text this is for the right of private judgement!” It is surprising that the obvious and important meaning of this passage should have been so generally overlooked, and that a sense should have been commonly given to the passage, which, to say the least, is obscure and irrelevant; q. d. “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind :” an exhortation which is not always practicable.

one act as in his conscience he judges right. Let him enjoy his liberty, without censure and without restraint.

CH. XIV.  
Ver. 5.

*He who regardeth the day regardeth it to the Lord<sup>3</sup>; and he who disregardeth the day disregardeth it to the Lord.* 6.

Positive institutions are nothing in themselves: it is the motive only which gives the observation of them a moral complexion. Whether a man abstains from all labour and recreation upon a particular day of the week, or whether he allows himself in both equally on every day, is in itself a matter of perfect indifference: but if one observes the day as a day of rest, because he thinks that God requires it, and that Christ is honoured by it, while he retains that conviction, he does well in regulating his conduct accordingly. And on the other hand, if another conscientiously believes that God has imposed no such restraints, and that the Christian doctrine, as a law of liberty, is more honoured by the disregard of all sabbatical distinctions, he also does equally well in following the dictates of his judgement. The observer and the nonobserver of holy seasons are alike acceptable to God, if they conscientiously obey the dictates of their respective understandings, and act in obedience to the will of God, and in a way which they deem most honourable to their Christian profession.

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<sup>3</sup> *Regardeth it to the Lord.*] “regardeth it to a master.” Wakefield; and in this way he translates the word, ver. 8, 9.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 6.

There is no meaning in language if the apostle does not here pronounce that all *sabbatical distinctions* are abolished under the Christian law. The apostle uses the utmost latitude of expression: whatever is fit and lawful upon one day is fit and lawful upon another, without any distinction between the first, or the seventh, and any other day of the week. But mark, the apostle is not treating upon the subject of Christian worship. This is undoubtedly a duty of universal obligation, which, for the sake of order and decency, must necessarily be carried on at some convenient and appropriate season. Nor is he to be understood as saying any thing to contravene that ancient and useful practice, which the Christian church in all ages has derived from the apostles, of observing the first day of the week as a Christian festival for the religious and joyful commemoration of the death of Christ, and of his resurrection on the third day. The opposition made by the apostle is to sabbatical impositions, not to religious institutions.

- 6. *Also*<sup>1</sup>, *he who eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth thanks to God; and he who abstaineth from eating*<sup>2</sup>, *abstaineth to the Lord, and he giveth thanks to God.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Also*.] This connecting particle is added in Griesbach's second edition, upon the authority of the most valuable manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> *He who abstaineth, &c.*] Gr. "he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not." The apostle's meaning is obvious; viz. that both the person who had no scruples, and he who had scruples, acted from the same motive, a desire to approve him-

Similar observations may be applied to the question concerning different kinds of food. The believer who lays himself under no ceremonial restraint, but who eats indifferently of any kind of wholesome food which is placed before him, without a scruple and without asking any question, acts thus because he thinks it an honour to the Christian religion that it lays no stress upon such distinctions; and he thanks God for his Christian liberty. On the other hand, he who abstains from certain articles of diet, because they are forbidden by the law of Moses, believes that he shows respect to the Christian institution by associating the profession of it with the discipline of the law; and he thanks God, that by combining the requisitions of both covenants, he can secure, as he believes, the benefits of both. And thus both parties in their respective practice being influenced by the same motives, are equally admitted by Christ, and equally approved by God; and therefore they ought to be mutually candid and tolerant to each other.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 6.

3. It is the true spirit of the Christian religion, that they who believe in it should devote themselves wholly to their Master and his cause, ver. 7—9.

*For none of us liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself.*

7.

By the law of our profession, self, the great idol of the unbelieving world, is totally annihilated.

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self the true disciple of Christ: but there is an ambiguity in the literal translation which it was thought expedient to avoid.

Ch. XIV. Neither the attainment of wealth, nor the gratification of the passions, nor the preservation of liberty, nor social enjoyments, nor the love of life, nor the fear of death, are any longer suffered to predominate in the breast, or to maintain any undue influence over the mind. When a man becomes a believer in Christ, he learns to look beyond himself, and to direct his regards to worthier objects.

Ver. 7.

8. *For whether we live, we live to the Lord<sup>1</sup>, or whether we die, we die to the Lord: whether, therefore, we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

By our profession of the Christian doctrine we enlist ourselves in the service of a Master, and in that service we must live and die. If the cause in which we embark may be best promoted by active exertion, however laborious, we must be willing to live, and to exert our powers, whatever they be, not in those situations which we would choose for ourselves, and which are most easy and commodious, but in those in which the Master places us, and in which we may be most useful. If the state of things be such, that the Master's cause will be best promoted by the sacrifice of life and all its enjoyments, the man who loves his Master and his service, and who breathes the spirit of his profession, does not hesitate a moment to make the most costly sacrifice; happy in the opportunity of testifying his gratitude and zeal. In life and in death

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<sup>1</sup> *Live to the Lord, &c.*] *Τῷ Κυρίῳ* "to this master." Wakefield: i. e. to God. See ver. 6.

the true believer has but one paramount object in view ; and that is, to approve himself the faithful and dutiful servant of the Master of his choice. Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 8.

*For to this end Christ both lived and died, and rose again<sup>2</sup>, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* 9.

And that Master is Christ, the prophet of Nazareth, once in a humble and suffering state ; now exalted and triumphant. He lived, and died, and rose again, not for his own benefit, but for that of all mankind, both the living and the dead. He descended to the grave that he might rise again, and might exhibit himself as the prince and leader of life ; the example and the pledge of immortality to those who inhabit the dark mansions of the tomb. And he was raised and exalted to glory, that he might possess universal dominion ; and that the whole race of mankind, under his benign administration, might be conducted to virtue, life, and happiness. His design was not to aggrandize himself, but to do the will of his heavenly Father, by raising mankind to glory and immortality ; and nothing can be more acceptable to him, than that his disciples should manifest a kind and forbearing spirit towards each other.

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<sup>2</sup> *Lived and died, and rose again :*] ἐζήσεν, καὶ ἀπέθανε, καὶ ἀνέστη. This is the reading of the Clermont manuscript. The received text reads, “ καὶ ἀπέθανε, καὶ ἀνέστη, καὶ ἀνέζησεν,” both died, and rose again, and revived. The reading which Griesbach selects is, “ καὶ ἀπέθανε, καὶ ἐζήσεν,” he both died and lived. The copies vary, but the sense is nearly the same.

Ch. XIV. 4. The account which each is to render of himself to God, makes it particularly unbecoming to indulge in mutual censures, ver. 10—12.

Ver. 10. *But thou, why dost thou condemn thy brother? and thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? since we shall all present ourselves before the tribunal of God<sup>1</sup>.*

If we were made responsible for each other, there would be some reason why we should interfere with each others conduct; but, as each individually is to answer for himself at the tribunal of God, and to abide the award due to his own character, how unbecoming and how culpable is it to sit in judgement upon one another! Why then do you, the Jewish believer, presume to pass a sentence of condemnation upon your Gentile brother? And how is it that you, the Gentile convert, not satisfied with quietly enjoying your own liberty, behave with a supercilious air to your more scrupulous brother, who still owns subjection to the impositions of the Mosaic law? Nothing can be more unbecoming, or more remote from the genuine spirit of Chris-

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<sup>1</sup> *Present ourselves before the tribunal of God.*] See Wakefield. *God*, is the reading of the Alexandrine, Clermont, and other manuscripts. *Christ*, is the received text, which Griesbach prefers. Dr. Priestley remarks, that “the judgement-seat of Christ, and that of God, are the same; not because Christ is God, but because he acts in the name and by the authority of God, which is fully expressed when it is said that ‘God will judge the world by Jesus Christ.’” Mr. Dodson contends that *God* is the true reading. See his note on Isa. xlv. 23. Archbishop Newcome observes that in this verse, and also in ver. 3, “it is the Jewish convert judges, and the Gentile convert despises.”



tianity, than such a conduct as this in either party. Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 11.

*For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall acknowledge God<sup>2</sup>. So then, every one of us must give an account of himself to God.* 12.

The language of the Jewish prophet (Isaiah xlv. 23), foretelling the conversion of the heathen nations, does in effect declare the same awful truth, that God is the universal judge. For God is represented as announcing, in the most solemn manner, that every individual of the human race shall acknowledge his authority and submit to his jurisdiction. It follows, therefore, that every human being will be accountable to God for his own character and behaviour; and consequently, that it is his duty and his wisdom to prepare for his own account, and not to sit in judgement upon others.

5. The apostle warns those who entertain just views of Christian liberty, not to indulge their liberty in such a manner as to ensnare the minds of their less enlightened brethren, ver. 13—21. 13.

*Let us then no longer judge one another, but do*

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<sup>2</sup> *It is written, &c.]* The received text in Isaiah xlv. 23, which the apostle here cites, stands thus in the public version: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." Mr. Dodson thus corrects the text and the translation: "By myself I have sworn, saith Jehovah (truth is gone forth from my mouth, the word, and it shall not be revoked), that to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God." See Dodson *in loc.*

Ch. XIV. *ye judge this rather<sup>1</sup>, not to lay a stumbling block,*  
 Ver. 13. *or a snare<sup>2</sup>, in your brother's way.*

Instead of wasting our time, and disgracing our character, by uncharitable censure on the one hand, or contemptuous scorn on the other, let those who understand the liberty of the gospel, and the little stress which it lays upon things indifferent, rather resolve upon laying a voluntary restraint upon themselves, and not use their liberty in circumstances which may mislead others, and tempt them to do what they believe to be wrong.

14. *I know, and am fully assured by the Lord Jesus<sup>3</sup>, that nothing is unholy in itself; but to him who esteemeth any thing to be unholy, to him it is unholy.*

<sup>1</sup> *Let us judge—do ye judge.*] κρίνωμεν—κρινετε. The apostle uses the same word in different senses. *q. d.* Let us not judge, *i. e.* Let us not censure, one another; but rather do ye judge, *i. e.* determine not to lay a stumbling block. “Let us not judge—but do ye rather determine.” Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> *A stumbling block—a snare.*] προσκομμα, a stumbling block. “*Offendiculum, lapis, vel obstaculum aliquod, in via positum, in quod si quis impingit, cadere, aut cespitare debet.*” Schleusner.—σκανδαλον, a snare. “*Lignum incurvum quo tendicula seu decipula sustinetur, et in quod impingens animal ipsam tendiculum in se subita ruina evertit.*” Schleusner. See Wetstein *Nov. Test.* tom. i. p. 302.—“A piece of wood which supports a trap, which falls on its being moved; and so may with peculiar propriety signify, whatever may be the occasion of ensnaring another, and drawing him into sin and mischief.” Doddridge. Bishop Pearce thinks that the words η σκανδαλον are a marginal gloss. See Newcome.

<sup>3</sup> *Assured by the Lord Jesus.*] “I know and am satisfied that under the Lord Jesus.” Wakefield. This makes excellent sense; but it seems more probable that the apostle alludes to the instruction which he had personally received from Jesus Christ. See Gal. i. 12.

I was once a Pharisee, brought up in all the scruples of that ceremonious sect ; but when it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ to invite me into the church, and to reveal his gospel to me, that I might be qualified to instruct others, he then made known to me the nullity of those distinctions upon which I formerly laid so great a stress ; so that I am now fully convinced that no wholesome food is unlawful in itself, and that all ceremonial distinctions are abolished under the new covenant. Still, however, if any one thinks otherwise, it is unlawful for him to eat food which he believes to be forbidden. Nor can he innocently relax from ceremonial restraints till his mind is more enlightened.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 14.

*But if, because of food thy brother be disquieted, thou no longer walkest in love : Destroy not him<sup>4</sup> by thy food for whom Christ died<sup>5</sup>.* 15.

If you eat without regard to ceremonial distinction, you act innocently so far as you are yourself concerned ; but if your conduct gives uneasiness to

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<sup>4</sup> *Destroy not him.*] “Lead him not to eat food contrary to his own conviction ;” ver. 23. Newcome. Rather, *Do not compel him to apostatize.* As those who were converted to the Christian religion are said to be *saved*, so they who apostatize from it may be described as *destroyed* ; because they have returned to those courses which lead to destruction, and from which it is probable that they will never be reclaimed. See Heb. vi. 4—9 ; 2 Pet. ii. 20—22.

<sup>5</sup> *For whom Christ died.*] The death of Christ ratified that new covenant, to the privileges of which both Jews and Gentiles were equally admitted, 1 Cor. xi. 25. Christ, therefore, died for all who had by baptism professed faith in his mission, and had been regularly admitted into that holy community of which he was the head.

Ch. XIV. your neighbour, if it induces him to think ill of his  
 Ver. 15. Christian brother, if it excites prejudices against the  
 Christian faith, or if it tempts him to indulge in a  
 liberty which in his conscience he believes to be un-  
 lawful, you are the means of harassing his mind, and  
 exposing him to self-reproach. This is not kind, and  
 the consequences may be more serious than you  
 imagine; for who can tell to what issue a disregard  
 to the remonstrances of conscience, even in cases  
 comparatively indifferent, may eventually lead? Do  
 not then, my enlightened brother, by the imprudent  
 exercise of your Christian liberty, impel to apostasy  
 and expose to ruin, one whom Christ has owned as  
 a disciple, and whom he has admitted into that  
 community which he has consecrated by his blood.

16. *Let not then your<sup>1</sup> privilege become a subject of  
 reproach.*

Do not use your Christian liberty so as to ensnare  
 your brethren, and thus to excite prejudice and oc-  
 casion reproach, either to yourself or to the gospel  
 which you profess.

17. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink<sup>2</sup>,  
 but justification, and peace, and joy, in the holy  
 spirit.*

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<sup>1</sup> Your privilege.] Gr. "good." Many manuscripts and ver-  
 sions read "our," which Wakefield prefers; who also trans-  
 lates αγαθον privilege, which is more intelligible.—"Liberta."  
 Rosenmuller.—"Let not then your liberty, which is a good you  
 enjoy under the gospel, be evil spoken of." Locke. Dr. Taylor  
 gives the same sense, and refers to 1 Cor. x. 29, 30, with Locke's  
 paraphrase upon it.

<sup>2</sup> Is not meat and drink.] The apostle's meaning is well ex-  
 pressed in Mr. Locke's paraphrase: "The privileges and advan-

That happy and privileged state to which you are advanced, and in which you glory, does not consist merely or chiefly in your emancipation from ritual distinctions: these are the least and lowest of your privileges. Your happiness, as believers in Christ, consists in your acquittal from the condemning sentence of the law; in your reconciliation to God, from whom you were formerly alienated by wicked works; and finally, in the gift of the holy spirit, which being the earnest of our admission into the family of God, excites a joyful assurance that we are the heirs of immortal life. Possessed of these glorious privileges and exalted hopes, can we for a moment hesitate whether we should practise a little self-denial in a case in which the most important interests of our brethren are endangered?

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 17.

*Moreover, he who in these things is the servant of Christ, is well pleasing to God, and approved by men.*

14.

I add further, that as these are the great privileges of the gospel, so every one who, under the in-

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tages of the kingdom of God do not consist in the enjoyment of greater variety of meats and drinks," &c. *q. d.* It is true that the gospel indulges more liberty in this respect than the law, but this is the least of its claims upon our gratitude: the blessings it confers are so unspeakably more valuable, that we may well be willing to sacrifice these trifles to the good of our neighbour. Joy in the holy spirit is mentioned as one of the privileges of the gospel. The Roman converts had not indeed yet received the holy spirit: but they probably knew and conversed with many who had received it, or at least they possessed abundant evidence that the spirit had been communicated, and of the important purpose for which it had been sent. See Rom. viii. throughout.

Ch. XIV. fluence of these high privileges and of these glorious hopes, yields a cheerful and uniform obedience to Christ as his master, and to the laws and requisitions of the gospel; and who, happy in the consciousness of his own liberty, avoids laying a stumbling block in the path of a less enlightened brother, is an ornament to his profession, and will secure by his judicious and exemplary conduct both the favour of God and the approbation and love of all wise and good men.

Ver. 18.

19. *Let us therefore pursue the things which tend to peace and mutual edification.*

Since all who believe in Christ are at peace with God, partakers of the same distinguished privileges, and co-heirs of the same eternal inheritance, let us not contend about trifles, but let us all endeavour to live in peace; and instead of judging and condemning one another, let us to the best of our power promote each others improvement in knowledge and in goodness.

20. *Do not for the sake of meat destroy the work of God<sup>1</sup>.*

All who believe are, as such, the workmanship of God; created anew by Jesus Christ, and by the profession of the gospel brought as it were into a new world. Do not, for want of a little self-denial in the article of food, deface the work of your Maker, and tempt your less enlightened brother to

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<sup>1</sup> *The work of God:] i. e.* “a Christian. 1 Cor. ix. 1; Eph. ii. 10; Phil. i. 6. *Destroying him*, here and ver. 15, is causing him to apostatize, or renounce the Christian faith.” Taylor.

desert a profession which gives countenance to what he apprehends to be unlawful indulgences ; or to comply with a practice which, however innocent in you, would in him be a virtual renunciation of his allegiance to Christ.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 20.

*All things indeed are pure, but it is wrong for a man to eat so as to cause another to stumble<sup>2</sup>.*

All kinds of wholesome food are innocent and lawful considered in the abstract ; but he cannot be pronounced guiltless, who, by inattention to the views and prepossessions of others, tempts his brother to do what he thinks wrong.

*It is right neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do any thing else by which thy brother is made to stumble, or is ensnared, or is made weak<sup>3</sup>.* 21.

Upon the whole, it is right to abstain from every thing, however innocent and agreeable, and to live even upon bread and water, rather than by self-indulgence in any article, however innocent, to ensnare the mind of a weaker and less informed professor, and tempt him, either to do what he believes to be wrong, or to abandon the faith of Christ as being inconsistent with the institutes of Moses and the law of God.

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<sup>2</sup> *To cause another to stumble.*] “to cause offence.” Newcome.—“who maketh others stumble by what he eateth.” Wakefield.—“The eating ought to be avoided when it cannot be done without endangering another man’s stumbling, and falling away from the gospel.” Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> *Or is ensnared, or is made weak.*] *ἡ σκανδαλίζεται, ἡ ἀσθενεῖ.* These words are wanting in the Alexandrine, Ephrem, and other manuscripts and versions. Griesbach retains them, but Wakefield drops them; and Archbishop Newcome says they have the appearance of a gloss.

Ch. XIV.  
Ver. 21.

This advice of the apostle as a general rule is excellent: Let nothing be done, however innocent in itself, which might induce well-meaning but uninformed persons to do what they believe to be wrong, which in them might be attended with the worst consequences.

The rule, however, like other general maxims, has its limits. If the wise were invariably to submit to the foolish, and the well-informed to the ignorant, the reign of prejudice and of superstition would be perpetual. Christian liberty must not be sacrificed to ignorance and error. Paul himself continued to associate with the Gentile believers at Antioch, when Peter through fear of giving offence withdrew, and for his duplicity and timidity was justly rebuked. A wise and good man will not give unnecessary offence: he will endeavour calmly to reason with, and to instruct, the weak and the prejudiced; he will at all times exercise discretion, and walk in love; but he will not see it to be his duty wholly to resign the liberty with which Christ has made him free.

6. The apostle offers general advice to each party, ver. 22, 23.

22. *Thou hast faith with regard to thyself<sup>1</sup>; retain*

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<sup>1</sup> *Thou hast faith with regard to thyself.*] Συ πισιν ἐχεις κατὰ σεαυτον. "Hast thou confidence in thyself?" Wakefield; who mentions in his note, that the Æthiopic connects κατὰ σεαυτον with the preceding words; and "much better thus," says he, "in my opinion." Upon this authority I adopt the same punctuation: Griesbach, in his last edition, states, that



it in the presence of God. *Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.* Ch. XIV. Ver. 22.

I now address a word of advice to the Gentile believer. You are satisfied with regard to yourself, that no stress is to be laid on things indifferent. Be it so: retain your principle; and act upon it at all times as in the presence of God, and accountable to him. You will then be under no temptation to make an improper use of your liberty. And let me remind you, that it is a great happiness to be preserved from carrying liberty to an improper excess, so as to overstep the boundary of things lawful, while we mean not to exceed the limit of things indifferent.

*But he who has scruples, is condemned if he eat; because he eateth not from conviction: and whatever is contrary to conviction is sin<sup>2</sup>.* 23.

But as to the believing Jew, who still retains his allegiance to the law, and scruples the use of what

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some authorities read thus: "The faith which thou hast with regard to thyself, retain in the presence of God. *Σὺ πιστὸς ἔχεις, κ. τ. λ.* The public Version reads, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." Dr. Taylor observes, that "there is no necessity for reading the first clause interrogatively; and he does not know that *κατά* ever signifies *to*; but frequently, *with respect to*, and so it should have been translated here. It is an exhortation not to keep his faith private to himself, not to suppress his sentiments, but to retain them steadily, and never to do or say any thing inconsistent with them." See Dr. Taylor's excellent note upon the text.

\* Griesbach upon the authority of the Alexandrine and many other copies and versions, here introduces the doxology, which in the received text is placed at the end of the sixteenth chapter; but though it does not seem to stand well in that place, the admission of it here interrupts the apostle's argument, which is continued to the thirteenth verse of the next chapter.

Ch. XIV. to others appears indifferent, while he entertains  
 Ver. 23. these opinions, he must not indulge himself in those liberties which are familiar to the Gentile, for if he does, he is self-condemned, and justly ; because he acts against his conscience. And he who acts contrary to the dictates of conscience, though it be only in comparative trifles, is really guilty of a moral offence ; the consequences of which may be more serious than the offender apprehends, or is willing to believe.

Ch. XV. 7. The apostle enforces mutual forbearance, and self-denial, from the example of Jesus Christ, ch. xv. 1—4.

Ver. 1. *But we who are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

However cautious scrupulous persons ought to be with regard to themselves, we, who have no such unnecessary scruples, ought to be very kind and tolerant to those who have ; and ought not to gratify our own taste at the expense of their feelings, and the hazard of their principles.

2. *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good, to edification<sup>1</sup>.*

Let every one endeavour by mutual compliances and voluntary self-denial to please his neighbour, and to keep him in good humour ; so far as this

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<sup>1</sup> *For his good, &c.*] The apostle sets a limit here to a person's acquiescence in the prejudices of weaker brethren. They are to be yielded to, only so far as may be necessary for their benefit and edification, that their less enlightened consciences may not be ensnared.

may contribute in any way to his good, and to his edification in the faith of Christ. Ch. XV.

*For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them who reproached thee have fallen upon me*<sup>2</sup>. Ver. 3.

Our Lord and master Jesus Christ, whose perfect example we ought always to set before our eyes, upon no occasion consulted his own gratification in preference to the good of others; but the whole tenor of his ministry was a course of labour and self-denial for the benefit of mankind. And with this view he submitted to the grossest insult and indignity, so that the words of the psalmist, Psalm lxi. 9, may be literally applied to him, that he was the object of hatred and reproach to all those who were the haters and revilers of God and truth.

*For whatsoever things were formerly written for our instruction, were written, that through patience, and comfort of the scriptures, we might have hope.* 4.

The examples of patient suffering under reproach and persecution, recorded in ancient history, and particularly in the Jewish scriptures, were written for our information and encouragement; that we may learn to bear self-denial, reproach, and persecution with the same faith and fortitude with which they have been supported by good men in former days; and maybe encouraged to hope, that our trials, like theirs, shall come to a happy termination.

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<sup>2</sup> *The reproaches, &c.*] This is a quotation from Ps. lxi. 9, which contains many passages strictly and literally applicable to Christ. But ver. 5, 6, make it impossible to regard it as a prophetic psalm in which Christ is the speaker throughout.

Ch. XV. 8. He prays that God would grant them a spirit of concord and unanimity, ver. 5, 6.

Ver. 5. *Now may the God of patience and consolation<sup>1</sup> grant you mutual unanimity according to Christ<sup>2</sup>, that with one consent and with one voice, you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>.*

And now may that great Being, who is the fountain of all good, who can support the heart, and fill the mind with comfort in the most trying seasons, endow you with that harmony of spirit which is so essential and ornamental to your Christian profession, even though you may not perfectly agree in judgement concerning things indifferent. That so

<sup>1</sup> *May the God of patience, &c.*] It is usual with the apostle, after recommending some particular virtue, to address a prayer to God, as the God of that virtue, to enforce it upon the minds of the persons to whom he writes. We have another instance of the same sort, ver. 13 of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> *According to Christ Jesus:*] *i. e.* "according to the will and to the example of Christ." See Newcome and Wakefield. "agreeably to the spirit and precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ." Taylor.

<sup>3</sup> *And one voice, you may give glory, &c.*] Gr. "one mouth." I agree with Dr. Taylor, that "the apostle is persuading them to a cordial coalition in public worship; and gives each party a substantial reason why they ought to unite their hearts as well as their voices. But as it would be more difficult to persuade the Jew, therefore he plies him with several quotations out of scripture." "We see here," says Dr. Priestley in his excellent note upon this text, "that all our works and duties respect the one true God, that they are what we owe to him, and also, that this one true God is the same that is usually called the Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by no means Jesus Christ himself. Little could this apostle imagine, that his writings could ever be thought to countenance any other doctrine."

you may unite together with cordial affection in the same acts of public worship, and may not be prevented by diversity of opinion upon ceremonial customs, from addressing your common prayers and thanksgivings to him, who, being the God and Father of our common master Jesus Christ, is equally the God and Father of all his true disciples, whether, with the believing Jew, they adhere to the rites of their forefathers, or, with the believing Gentile, they hold themselves absolved from the ceremonial institutions of the law.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 6.

9. The apostle finally urges mutual conciliation from the consideration, that both Jew and Gentile are equally admitted to the privileges of the gospel, the former on the ground of promise, and the latter of unmerited mercy, ver. 7—12.

*Therefore, receive one another, as Christ has also received you, to the glory of God<sup>4</sup>.* 7.

And now I repeat, at the conclusion of this discourse, the advice with which I began, that you should receive and love one another as brethren, notwithstanding any differences of opinion concerning ritual observances, as Jesus Christ has admitted you all, without distinction, into the possession of the privileges and hopes of that glorious com-

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<sup>4</sup> “*You to the glory of God.*”] “This I conceive denotes the gospel state, into which believing Jews and Gentiles were taken, and which he signifies by *glory*, ch. ix. 23 ; and describes to be eminently glorious, 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.” Taylor. *Us* is the reading of the received text, but the best copies read *you*. See Griesbach.

Ch. XV. munity of which God has appointed him to be the head.

Ver. 8. *For I declare<sup>1</sup>, that Jesus Christ became a minister of the circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers.*

You ought to receive, and to live in Christian fellowship with one another ; for I solemnly declare, that Jesus Christ was sent to invite you both to the privileges of the new covenant. And first, to the Jewish nation, to confirm the truth of God, and as an accomplishment of the divine promise made long ago to the ancestors of the chosen people.

9. *But, that the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy's sake<sup>2</sup>, as it is written, For this cause I will acknowledge thee among the Gentiles, and will sing praise to thy name.*

And I also assure you, that Christ was equally sent as a minister of peace to the Gentiles ; not,

<sup>1</sup> For *I declare*.] *γὰρ* is the reading of the best copies, and marked by Griesbach as the preferable reading, though not admitted into his text. The illative particle is most suitable, because the apostle is assigning reasons why Jewish and Gentile believers should unite in Christian worship. The received text reads *ἄρ, Now I declare*.

<sup>2</sup> *Should glorify God, &c.*] Perhaps the apostle's meaning in these two verses would be more clearly expressed in this manner : For I aver that Christ was sent as a minister of God to the Jewish nation, to verify the divine promise to their ancestors ; but he was sent to invite the Gentiles into the glory of God, *i. e.* into the gospel covenant, not in consequence of any promise to their ancestors which might entitle them to the blessing, but solely as an act of mercy. Yet being received by Christ, they ought to be acknowledged by the Jewish believers. So that the expression, that the Gentiles should glorify God, means the same thing as being “ received to the glory of God,” ver. 7.

indeed, as a blessing to which they had any claim, either of merit, or by promise; on the contrary, they are admitted to participate in the glorious privileges of the gospel, solely upon the footing of mercy. But being thus admitted into the new covenant through mercy, they have a right to be received into fellowship by their elder brethren of the Hebrew nation, who had a claim by promise, agreeably to the language of their own scripture, Psalm xviii. 49, For this cause I will celebrate thee among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to thy name: where it is plain that the psalmist associates the heathen with himself in an act of thanksgiving to God for his great mercy.

Ch. xv.  
Ver. 9.

*And again the scripture saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, together with his people, Deut. xxxii. 43.* 10.

*And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and repeat his praise, all ye people, Ps. cxvii. 1.* 11.

Where the Jews, the ancient people of God, are called upon to echo back the praises which are uttered by the Gentiles.

In these remarkable passages, Moses the law-giver of Israel, and David the ancestor of the Messiah, express their readiness to unite with Gentiles in acts of praise, and urge, or at least set an example to their countrymen to do the same.

*And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and one who shall rise up to rule over the Gentiles, and in him shall the Gentiles hope, Isaiah xi. 10.* 12.

Isaiah goes still further than either Moses or

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 12.

**David.** He expressly foretells, that a descendant from the stock of Jesse shall reign over the whole Gentile world, who shall become the willing subjects of his government, and the happy expectants and partakers of the blessings of his auspicious reign. This prophecy is accomplished in Jesus, the true Messiah, the anointed king of God's ancient people; who invites the Gentile nations to submit to his dominion, and who, receiving them as his lawful subjects, of course requires their fellow subjects to acknowledge their rights, and to admit them as fellow citizens of the same holy and happy community.

10. The apostle concludes the section with a prayer, that God would increase in their hearts that spirit of peace and love which he had so earnestly recommended, ver. 13.

13. *Now may the God of hope<sup>1</sup> fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy spirit<sup>2</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> *The God of hope.*] See ver. 5, and the note there. He here addresses the divine Being as the God of *hope*, as he there addresses him as the God of patience and consolation.

<sup>2</sup> *Through the power of the holy spirit :*] *i. e.* through the promises of the gospel, which are confirmed by the powerful operations of the holy spirit. Of these the Roman believers must have had abundant evidence, though, not having been yet visited by an apostle, they had not themselves been the subjects of these powers. Dr. Taylor explains the clause, “through the mighty working of the holy spirit conferred upon you as the earnest and pledge of it.” But by whom were these gifts conferred? It is possible indeed, and even probable, that some of the eminent persons whose names are mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, had received the holy spirit from the hands of an apostle, perhaps of Paul himself, before they settled at Rome. But



And now to draw to the conclusion of this long argument, as no good is to be obtained without the blessing of the most High, may that God who is the author of hope, and who hath imparted the gospel, which is the great foundation of hope, both to Jews and Gentiles, grant success to these earnest exhortations ! May he fill your hearts with peace ; peace with God, peace of mind, and peace with each other ! they will then overflow with joy ; and faith will be manifest in its fruits. Of such a temper of mind, hope is the natural consequence ; the inseparable associate : hope that is founded upon the promises of the gospel, and confirmed by the gifts of the holy spirit. And a better wish I cannot form, a more important petition I cannot offer for my Christian brethren at Rome, than that of this glorious hope they may ever possess an abundant portion.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 13.

It cannot be doubted, that the apostle's pious prayer was heard, and that his wise and benevolent advice produced its proper effect. So that when he was sent in chains to Rome a few years afterwards, he would find that a spirit of peace and mutual conciliation had taken place of the spirit of bitterness, and party zeal. And it is much to be desired, that believers in all ages should learn from this excellent epistle, that a spirit of candour, of conciliation, and

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it is most probable, that spiritual gifts were not frequent among the believers at Rome. Mr. Wakefield translates the clause, " that ye may abound in this hope under the influence of an unspotted mind ;" not, I think, in the spirit of the apostle's style.

Ch. XV. of mutual kindness, is far more acceptable to God,  
Ver. 13. and far more becoming the Christian character,  
than the warmest zeal either for or against the observance of ceremonial institutions.

## SECTION IV.

*The apostle apologizes for the freedom of his advice; he claims this privilege as the apostle of the Gentiles: he gives a modest account of his success, and announces his intention to visit Rome in his way to Spain, after having executed the commission he had undertaken to carry the contributions from Macedonia and Achaia, to the church at Jerusalem; requests their prayers, and concludes with his blessing. Ch. xv. 14 to the end.*

1. The apostle pleads his commission to the Gentiles as an apology for the freedom of his remarks, ch. xv. 14—16.

14. *But I am myself persuaded, brethren, concerning you, that ye are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able even to admonish one another.*

Though I thus exhort and pray for you, it is not that I have any doubt either of your knowledge or of your candour; for I believe that you are perfectly well informed with respect to your duty, in the case which I have mentioned; that you are perfectly well disposed towards each other; and if at

any time any member of your society should be deficient either in knowledge or in charity, that you are perfectly capable of setting him right in his judgment, or of reminding him of his duty, without the interference of others who have no relation to you.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 14.

*Nevertheless, I have written to you, brethren, putting you in mind, somewhat freely, in part, because of the favour<sup>1</sup> which is given me by God, that I should be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, officiating in the gospel of God, that this oblation of the Gentiles<sup>2</sup> may be acceptable, being sanctified by the holy spirit<sup>3</sup>.* 15. 16.

<sup>1</sup> In part, or, partly, because of the favour, &c.] The apostle has written freely to remind them of their duty. But why write at all, if they were so well disposed and so well qualified as he describes? Partly, no doubt, because, excellent as they were, they might be improved by his good counsels. This he insinuates, but does not express. And partly, because, being the apostle of the Gentiles, he was entitled to give his advice and to require their attention.—*χαρις*, favour, i. e. the apostolic office. See ch. i. 5, xii. 3; and the notes there. There is a difficulty among interpreters, how to connect the words *απο μερος*. Many connect them with “*τολυμωροτερον*, q. d. paulo liberius.” Rosenmuller. “I have written to you rather freely upon some points.” Wakefield. Dr. Taylor translates the words, “with respect to part of you;” and explains them as alluding to the Gentile believers, whom he had addressed with more than ordinary freedom. Rosenmuller says they may be joined with *εγραψα*, q. d. In some parts of this letter I have written freely. In the paraphrase they are connected with *δια τον χαριν*, q. d. I have written freely, partly because, &c. The amiable modesty of the apostle, and his desire to avoid assuming an air of superiority, make his language obscure.

<sup>2</sup> Oblation of the Gentiles.] So Wakefield. See Isa. lxi. 20. The terms are sacrificial. The apostle speaks of the Gentiles as an offering, and himself as the priest. See Locke.

<sup>3</sup> Sanctified by the holy spirit.] “The gifts of the holy spirit to Gentile believers, were a proof of their being accepted by God, and were a public criterion of their separation from the

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 16.

It may then naturally be asked, why I intrude advice if it be not wanted. My answer is, that I have offered these free admonitions, partly, to call your attention to that great favour which God has conferred upon me, by investing me with the office of preaching the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles; that so, as an officiating priest, I might collect into the sacred temple of the Christian community, the great body of believing Gentiles, and might present them as an acceptable offering to God; who has given the most public and satisfactory assurance of his willingness to accept this oblation, by the mission of his holy spirit, like the celestial fire, to consecrate them to himself<sup>1</sup>.

The signal honour thus conferred upon me is a sufficient warrant for the freedom with which I have offered my advice, even though I am not personally known to you.

2. The apostle takes occasion modestly to report the great success of his mission, ver. 17—21.

17. *I have therefore cause of glorying through Christ Jesus, in things pertaining to God*<sup>2</sup>.

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unbelieving world. Being sanctified and cleansed, not by any external rites, but by the gifts and virtues of the holy spirit." Taylor. See Acts x. 47; Rom. viii. 16.

<sup>1</sup> "The Gentile converts were sanctified, or devoted to God by the holy spirit, which descended upon the apostles and others in the form of fire, as victims were consecrated to God by the fire of the altar." Dr. Priestley.

<sup>2</sup> *Things pertaining to God.*] The same phrase occurs, Heb. v. 1, where it is used of the things which were offered to God in the temple ministration. See Locke.

Having been thus appointed to the high office of the apostleship to the Gentiles, I have not been negligent in performing its duties; and I have indeed some reason to boast of the success of my labours in the service of God, in spreading the Christian faith; which success is wholly to be attributed, not to any merit or ability in me, but to the presence and aid of Jesus Christ.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 17.

*For I will not presume<sup>3</sup> to speak of any thing, but what Christ has done through me for the obedience of the Gentiles in word and deed<sup>4</sup>, by mighty signs and wonders through the power of the holy spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and round about, even as far as Illyricum, I have fully declared<sup>5</sup> the gospel of Christ.*

18.

19.

For, to speak the truth without any exaggeration (for, whatever some may do, I would not presume to take the credit of labours and successes which are not my own), I have myself, in the execution of my apostolic mission, taken a circuit from Jeru-

<sup>3</sup> *I will not presume, &c.] i. e.* either I will not boast of labours and successes in which others have had perhaps a principal share—or, I will not boast in any thing of my own, but only so far as I have been supported by Christ, and an instrument in his hands. See Taylor. “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me.” Newcome, who includes these words in a parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> *In word and deed, &c.] q. d.* in profession and practice; or hath wrought through me—by word and deed, “by the manner in which he hath enabled me to speak, and the things which he hath strengthened me to perform.” Doddridge. See Rosenmüller. “the holy spirit.” This is the reading of the best copies. The received text reads the “spirit of God.” See Griesbach.

<sup>5</sup> *Have fully declared:] i. e.* so as not to leave any considerable place behind, where the gospel has not been made known.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 19.

saalem to Illyricum; and in every place of consequence which lay in or near my course, and where the gospel was unknown, I have promulgated the joyful tidings with success. Yet, far from arrogating to myself the honour of this splendid achievement, I most readily acknowledge that I was merely an instrument in the hand of Christ, my master, who qualified me for this great undertaking, first by instructing me in the gospel, and afterwards by endowing me with those spiritual gifts and miraculous powers, which excited the attention of the heathen, and subdued them to the gentle yoke of the gospel; so that they not only professed faith in it, but yielded a ready obedience to it.

20. *Being studious indeed, so to preach the gospel, not where Christ had been named, lest I should*  
 21. *build upon another man's foundation*<sup>1</sup>; *but as it is written, They to whom nothing*<sup>2</sup> *was related concerning him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand,* Isa. lii. 15.

My reason for studiously and even ambitiously

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<sup>1</sup> *Being studious—lest I should build, &c.]* “earnestly striving, even to an ambitious desire.” Newcome.—The apostle here seems to allude to those false apostles, who intruded themselves into the churches which he had planted, and of whose conduct he so bitterly complains in his epistles to the Galatians and the Corinthians. See Gal. i. 6, 7, iv. 17; 2 Cor. x. 9—18.

<sup>2</sup> *They to whom, &c.]* St. Paul quotes from the LXX.; and, as the text is cited by Justin and by Origen, who professes only to quote the LXX. where it agrees with the Hebrew, Mr. Dodson infers that the Hebrew in this case ought to be corrected by the LXX. The text stands thus in the public Version from the Hebrew text,—“that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.”

selecting those places for the exercise of my apostolic mission where the gospel was altogether unknown, was, that I might not appear unhandsomely to clash with the labours of my brethren, and to covet the reputation of building up a church where others had undergone the more toilsome labour of laying the foundation, and had made the first converts to the faith : a delicacy which has not always been observed with regard to myself. And in this way I fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah, who, in the introduction to his celebrated prediction of the humiliation and succeeding exaltation of the Messiah, announces, that his salutary doctrine shall be taught to those who had no previous intimation of his appearance ; that is, to the heathen world.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 21.

3. The apostle announces his intention to visit Rome in his way to Spain, after he had executed the commission he had undertaken of carrying the contributions from Macedonia and Achaia, to the church at Jerusalem, ver. 22—28.

*Therefore, I have been often hindered from coming to you.* 22.

You may naturally suppose, that it has long been my earnest wish to preach the gospel at Rome ; and I should gladly have been the first to communicate the joyful tidings to the imperial city. But the duties of my mission making it imperative upon me to preach the gospel, and to settle churches every where in my way, I was necessarily precluded from accomplishing my desire.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 23.

- But now having no longer any object<sup>1</sup> in these regions, and having had for many years a great desire to come to you, whensoever I take my journey into Spain<sup>2</sup>, I hope, as I pass by, to visit you, and to be set forward thither by you, after having first been satisfied in some measure with your company.*

But these obstacles exist no longer ; for having now fulfilled my mission in these parts, and there being no other place where my ministry is particularly required, I hope shortly to gratify the earnest wish I have long entertained, and to make you a visit in my way to Spain. And having enjoyed your company, though but for a short time, I hope to be assisted by you to proceed on my journey.

25. *But now I am going to Jerusalem, to perform*  
26. *a service to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased<sup>3</sup> to make a certain contribution*

<sup>1</sup> *Object.*] Gr. "place," or "business." Newcome.—"scope." Wakefield. "*non amplius opportunitatem habens.*" Rosenmuller. See Heb. xii. 17. He had fulfilled his mission. there was no place to which duty called him where he had not preached the gospel.

<sup>2</sup> *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, &c.*] The received text adds, "I will come unto you, for," &c. which words are omitted in the best copies, and by Griesbach.

<sup>3</sup> *Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased, &c.*] "It hath pleased those of Macedonia," &c. Newcome.—The Christians in Judea were in general poor ; but many of the believers in Macedonia and Achaia appear to have been persons of rank and property ; who could well afford and were well disposed to send relief to their indigent and suffering brethren ; being sensible of the obligation they were under to the Jewish believers for the communication of the invaluable blessing of the gospel. How much the apostle interested himself in raising a contribution upon this occasion, appears from the directions which he



*for the poor saints in Jerusalem. They have indeed been pleased to do this, and they are debtors to the Jews. For if the Gentiles have participated in their spiritual things, they ought also to minister to the Jews in worldly things.*

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 27.

I cannot, indeed, be with you immediately; for I am engaged in a charitable service, which makes it necessary for me to set off immediately for Jerusalem. The opulent believers in Macedonia and Achaia have made a very liberal contribution for the relief of their indigent and persecuted brethren in Judea; and the donation is of such a magnitude, that my colleagues and I, in connexion with other deputies selected from the churches, have undertaken the charge of it to the place of its destination. Our Gentile brethren have indeed contributed largely upon this occasion, and with hearts overflowing with generosity. And they have done well; they have acted as they ought. For, after all, the balance of obligation is much in their favour. The Jews have communicated to them the blessings of the gospel; life, hope, and immortality. Well then may they expect in a season of distress, to share liberally in those worldly possessions in which

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lays down concerning it in the two epistles to the Corinthians; where he not only urges various motives to induce them to contribute largely, but promises, that if the collection is sufficiently respectable, he will himself accompany Luke and others, who had undertaken the charge of delivering it to the believers at Rome. This is the journey which he had in view when he was writing to the Romans. See 1 Cor. xvi. 1—6; 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Ch. XV. their Gentile brethren abound. So that the kindness is mutual and reciprocal.

Ver. 28. *When, therefore, I shall have performed this, and have sealed<sup>1</sup> to them this fruit, I will pass by you into Spain.*

As soon, therefore, as I shall have dispatched this business, and have executed the commission I have undertaken of delivering this grateful fruit of Christian liberality safe into the hands of those for whom it is intended, I will set off from Jerusalem upon my intended mission into Spain, and will call upon you in the way.

4. The apostle, after expressing his confidence, that his visit to them would be eminently beneficial, entreats an interest in their prayers for his protection and success, and concludes with his apostolical benediction, ver. 29—33.

29. *And I know, that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ<sup>2</sup>.*

Whether providence may permit me to accomplish my purpose I know not. But of one thing I am assured ; that at whatever time, or in whatever manner, I may visit my friends at Rome, I shall bring the blessing of Christ with me in all its fullness ; I shall lay before you the whole plan of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Sealed, &c.*] “consigned to them this fruit of love.” Newcome.—“*consignari solent quæ deponuntur.*” Grotius.

<sup>2</sup> *The blessing of Christ.*] The received text reads “*of the gospel of Christ* :” the sense is the same. The word *gospel* is omitted in almost all the most ancient copies, and is dropped in Griesbach’s last edition.

gospel in all its simplicity, beauty, and perfection; and shall confirm it by the gifts of the holy spirit. This is no vain boast of mine; for I am specially called by Christ, and appointed to this service. And I am conscious of that within me which assures me, that at Rome in particular my ministrations will be eminently useful.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 29.

*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the spirit<sup>a</sup>, that ye strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea; and that my service at Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints<sup>b</sup>; that by the will of God I may come to you with joy, and may refresh myself with you.*

30.

31.

32.

But though I desire and hope to visit you, and am confident that my proposed visit will be productive of the highest benefit to you, it is quite uncer-

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<sup>a</sup> By the love of the spirit.] “per illam dilectionem quam in nobis effecit spiritus sanctus, nempe per doctrinam Christi.” Rosenmüller.—“by the love which is the fruit of the spirit.” Newcome.

<sup>b</sup> May be acceptable to the saints.] “Optat ut Judæo-christiani christianos ex gentibus ament, conspecta eorum in se beneficentia.” Rosenmüller. See 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13. “The Jews,” says Dr. Taylor, “were generally treated as objects of contempt and insult through the whole Roman empire. The apostle was in hopes, this liberal contribution sent by the Gentile Christians, converted by Paul’s ministry, would engage the affections of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, on their part much prejudiced against the reception of the Gentiles into the church and covenant of God, without submitting to the law.” He adds, “I make no doubt, this is an instance of St. Paul’s zeal and prudent endeavours to establish a good harmony between Christian Jews and Gentiles.”

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 32.

tain, both when and how I may be permitted to execute my purpose ; to effectuate which, I must first obtain leave of him whose servant I am, and by whose orders I move in every step of my progress. I earnestly entreat you, therefore, my brethren, by your affectionate regard to our common master Jesus Christ, the success of whose gospel will, I trust, be promoted by my intended visit, and by that kindness of heart which is the genuine effect of this new and spiritual dispensation, that you will unite earnestly with me in your prayers to God for me. First, that I may escape from the murderous fury of the Jews, who are hardened in unbelief, and whose rage is particularly directed against me, who having been once a persecutor like themselves, am now a zealous and successful teacher of the gospel among the heathen. Also, that the present which I bear to the Hebrew Christians from their Gentile brethren, may be received with a becoming spirit ; that it may be accepted with gratitude, and may be the means of conciliating the affection of the Jewish believers, and abating their prejudices against their Gentile brethren. And finally, that God of his good pleasure may give success to my purposes and hopes, that so I may fulfill my intention of visiting you in my way to Spain, and may enjoy the satisfaction which I promise myself in witnessing your Christian spirit, and in contributing to your edification in the gospel.

33. *Now may the God of peace be with you all.  
Amen.*

To conclude : whether the visit which I propose, take place at an earlier or be deferred to a later period, or whether it be altogether laid aside, my earnest desire is, that you may at all events secure the protection of One, who is infinitely better able than I am to promote your true interest. May you enjoy the presence and favour of Almighty God ; to whom we are permitted through the grace of the gospel to look as a God at peace with us, reconciled to us, graciously acknowledging the character of a father, and engaging to provide every thing good for us ; and to whom we cannot make a more acceptable return than by living in peace and mutual affection with each other, notwithstanding any differences of opinion which may prevail concerning rites and forms ! May God be with you, and all will be well ! Amen.

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 33.

The pious apostle's prayer was in part granted. He was permitted to visit Rome : and when he came thither, it was indeed in the fullness of the blessing of Christ ; which is evident from those admirable epistles which he wrote while he was a prisoner there, and which are still extant for the instruction and edification of the church in every age. But the earnest desires of himself and of his friends were in part denied ; and the plan which he had formed for executing his purpose was totally disappointed.— Whether he was ever permitted to extend his apostolic mission to Spain, is quite uncertain ; and though he visited Rome, it was as an ambassador

Ch. XV.  
Ver. 33.

in bonds. Very soon after his arrival in Jerusalem upon the benevolent errand of conveying to his poor brethren the liberal contribution of the Gentile believers, he was seized by his unbelieving countrymen, of whose malice he expresses his just apprehension, and was by them restrained for two years from the exercise of his public ministry: after which he was sent a prisoner to Rome, where he continued in bonds for two years longer. And while there, by the fortitude and magnanimity with which he suffered, by the excellent epistles which he indited, and by the instructive discourses which he delivered, he probably contributed more to the promulgation of Christian truth than he could have done in any other circumstances. Thus was the great design of his mission and ministry accomplished, though in a manner widely different from that which he originally expected or intended.

Let those who, like this eminent apostle, are earnestly bent upon promoting Christian truth, learn from his example humbly to acquiesce in the occasional disappointment of those plans of usefulness which they had formed for themselves, and to which they were most fondly attached. Let them resign themselves to the disposals of divine providence, content to act their part in the best manner they are able in the sphere which is allotted to them. Every one has his peculiar province assigned to him by the great master of the drama; who can never be mistaken in his selection of the instruments which he employs: every one has his proper talent

and post of service. The deficiency of some shall be supplied by the ability of others ; and in the end, nothing shall be wanting to the harmony and perfection of the wise and benevolent plan. Ch. xv.  
Ver. 33.

## SECTION V.

*The apostle sends his salutations to his Christian friends at Rome, interspersed with various expressions of affection and esteem. He offers his parting advice ; and concludes with a benediction and doxology.* Ch. xvi.  
*Ch. xvi. throughout.*

1. The apostle sends salutations to his Christian friends ; and begins with recommending to their regard the person who was the bearer of his letter, ver. 1—16<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Priestley well observes, in his notes on this chapter, that “ the conclusion of most of Paul’s epistles, though least valuable as to their direct use, are highly valuable indirectly, and as an evidence for the truth of Christianity ; so many particular persons and circumstances being mentioned as give them the most unambiguous appearance of genuine epistles, and exclude all idea of forgery. Indeed there are no epistles come down to us from ancient times that have such clear evidence of genuineness as these : and accordingly, it does not appear that it was ever called in question.”

“ If this case be considered,” continues this admirable writer, “ it will be found absolutely impossible to admit the genuineness of these epistles,—i. e. their having been actually written by the apostle Paul while he was engaged in preaching the gospel, in the midst of business and so much contention, when all his motions were watched by his enemies and false friends,—without admitting the truth of the facts which he mentions in

Ch. XVI. *I recommend to you Phebe, our sister, who is a*  
 Ver. 1. *deaconess<sup>1</sup> of the church which is at Cenchrea, that*  
 2. *ye receive her in the Lord, as is worthy of saints ;*  
*and that ye may assist her in whatsoever business*  
*she may have need of you, for she has been a helper<sup>2</sup>*  
*of many, and of myself<sup>3</sup> also.*

Cenchrea was a sea-port, at a small distance from Corinth, from which city this epistle is dated. It seems that a church, that is, an organized assembly of believers, had been formed at Cenchrea; of which church Phebe, a female of respectability who was

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them as at that time known to all, especially the miraculous gift of the spirit, and such a reception of Christianity in that early period, while the facts were recent, and open to every man's examination. AND THE TRUTH OF THESE IMPLIES THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY: that is, they necessarily lead us to conclude, that they were facts admitted by those who were best qualified to examine their truth, and who had every motive for doing it with impartiality, that Christ preached the doctrines which are ascribed to him in the gospel history; that he wrought many miracles in support of his divine mission; that he was publicly crucified, and that he actually rose from the dead. These facts, with those which are necessarily implied in them, are all that we ought to understand by Christianity."

<sup>1</sup> *A deaconess.*] See Dr. Taylor's excellent note upon this subject, and a very pertinent quotation from Cornelius Nepos. Newcome observes, that there were deaconesses in Bythinia in the time of Pliny. Epp. x. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *A helper.*] *προσῆταις* one whose office it was to show hospitality to strangers. Rosenmuller. Two uncial manuscripts read *παρῆταις*, which Locke and Bowyer conjecture to be the true reading, alluding to the word *παρῆταις* in the preceding clause; *q. d.* protect her, for she has been the protectress of many, and also of myself. She was probably a person of property and consequence, or she would hardly have had occasion to visit Rome upon business of her own.—"*Metaphora elegantissima, petita a militibus, qui in acie sibi adstant, mutuoque sunt auxilio, unde παρῆταις dicuntur.*" Rosenmuller.



intrusted with the care of this epistle, was a distinguished member. She was deaconess of the church. The office of a deacon was, to provide for the poor, to visit the sick, to instruct, admonish, and comfort, as occasion might require. And as in Greece it would have been reckoned indecorous for men to have performed these offices for the female sex, women of character and probity were appointed to it.

Ch. XVI.  
Ver. 2.

It appears that this excellent woman was a person of considerable property and of great hospitality: she delighted in doing good; she employed her opulence and her influence in entertaining and succouring those who were in want, and particularly the persecuted believers in Christ. The apostle himself acknowledges his obligations to her kindness.

The affairs of this eminent Christian called her to Rome; and the apostle trusts her with the charge of his important epistle. He earnestly recommends her to the favour and protection of the believers at Rome; and requests, not only that they will treat her with the respect due to her character and station in the church, but that they will afford her the same assistance in the prosecution of her concerns which she had so liberally and so frequently afforded to others, and to himself in particular.

*Salute Priscilla<sup>3</sup> and Aquila, my fellow labourers in Christ Jesus; who for my life laid down their own necks: to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

3.

4.

<sup>3</sup> *Priscilla.*] Many of the best copies read *Prisca*, which is adopted by Griesbach.

Ch. XVI.  
Ver. 4. It appears from this salutation, that Aquila and Priscilla, who had left Rome upon the decree of Claudius for the banishment of the Jews, were now returned, that decree having expired at the death of the emperor. The apostle had found them at Corinth, Acts xviii. 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; had lodged in their house, and had maintained himself by working with them in their occupation. He had probably converted them to the Christian faith; and such was their affectionate attachment to him, that they accompanied him to Ephesus: and while Paul was engaged in missionary labours to Jerusalem and elsewhere, they remained at Ephesus, instructed Apollos in the faith, and having recommended him to the believers in Achaia, they returned to Rome upon the death of Claudius. It appears from the apostle's grateful acknowledgement, that upon some emergent occasion, probably during the riot at Corinth which was suppressed by Gallio, they had exposed themselves to imminent danger on his account. Of this instance of faithful friendship he here expresses his affectionate recollection; and justly adds, that his friends were entitled to the thanks, not only of himself, but of all the Gentile churches, to the instruction and edification of which the apostle's whole life was devoted.

5. *Salute also the church that is in their house.*

—their pious family, and all their friends and neighbours who from time to time assemble in their large and commodious habitation for Christian worship.

*Salute Epænetus my beloved friend, who is the first fruits of Asia<sup>1</sup> to Christ.* Ch. XVI.  
Ver. 5.

—who was the first person in the proconsular Asia that was induced by my preaching to abandon heathen idolatry, and to profess faith in Christ; who has always acted in the spirit of his profession, and for whom I entertain the warmest friendship, though, as he is now settled at Rome, I can no longer enjoy his society.

*Salute Mary, who has taken much pains for us<sup>2</sup>.* 6.

—who has been useful to us in our ministry while she remained with us; and who, I doubt not, is equally active and useful in her present station.

*Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners; who are in reputation among the apostles, who also were believers in Christ before me.* 7.

Of these once eminent and useful Christians we know nothing more than what the apostle here relates: that they were his relations, that they were pious believers in Jesus while he was a cruel persecutor of the faith; that they were persons whose faith and zeal had recommended them to the notice and friendship of the apostles; that after the conversion of their kinsman they had probably joined him in his missionary labours, and had been

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<sup>1</sup> *Asia.*] This is the reading of the best copies, and of Griesbach. The received text reads *Achaia*.

<sup>2</sup> *For us.*] Many good copies read, for *you*, or among you; which reading is adopted by Mr. Wakefield.

Ch. XVI. fellow-sufferers with him in the cause of truth ; and  
 Ver. 7. that being now settled at Rome, they were deservedly distinguished by the apostle's affectionate remembrance.

8. *Salute Amplias, my beloved friend in the Lord.*
9. *Salute Urbanus, our fellow-labourer in Christ :*
10. *and Stachys, my beloved friend. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ.*

—whose faith has passed through a severe trial with safety and honour.

*Salute those who are of Aristobulus's household.*

11. *Salute Herodian my kinsman : salute those of the household of Narcissus<sup>1</sup> who are believers in the Lord.*

Of these families some of the members are eminently pious believers in Christ, though others may still unhappily continue in unbelief. Assure my brethren that they are not forgotten by me, even though they should rank among the menials of the household.

12. *Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who has laboured much in the Lord.*

These were Christian women, who, by their active services in those offices in the church which were particularly assigned to females, had entitled themselves to the special notice of the apostle.

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<sup>1</sup> *Narcissus.*] Narcissus was a freedman of Claudius, of whom mention is made by Suetonius in Claud. § 28 ; and by Tacitus Ann. xii. 57. See Rosenmüller. As some believers were of Cesar's household, it is not impossible that this courtier was the person named by the apostle.

*Salute Rufus<sup>2</sup>, chosen in the Lord; and his mother, who is also mine.* Ch. XVI. Ver. 13.

Rufus, who was an eminent Christian at Rome when this letter was written, might possibly be the son of Simon the Cyrenian who had been compelled to bear the cross of Christ; for Mark, who wrote his gospel for the benefit of the believers at Rome, remarks, chap. xv. 21, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. He is said to be chosen in the Lord, as being a believer of distinguished eminence. And the apostle sends his salutations to the mother of Rufus, whom he calls his own mother: probably on account of her maternal kindness and attention to him upon some former occasions.

Next follows a list of names to which no mark of distinction is annexed, but who without doubt were eminent Christians, and well known at Rome at the time when the apostle wrote.

*Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes<sup>3</sup>, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus and Julius, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints<sup>4</sup> that are with them. Salute one another with a holy kiss<sup>5</sup>.* 14. 15. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Rufus.] See Newcome in *loc*.

<sup>3</sup> Hermes.] Supposed by Origen and many of the ancients to have been the author of a work of great antiquity, called "The Shepherd."

<sup>4</sup> All the saints.] "From the great number of persons," says Dr. Priestley, "to whom the apostle sends salutations at Rome, we see how well informed he was of the state of Christians there, and of the characters of those who composed that infant church." He adds, "it is well observed by protestants, that among so many salutations of Paul to the Christians at

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Ver. 16.

This mode of salutation at the breaking up of Christian assemblies, was introduced among them from the Jewish synagogue. It seems to have given offence to the heathen, and to have been the occasion of many calumnies; for which reason it was soon discontinued.

*All the churches<sup>1</sup> of Christ salute you.*

The reputation of your faith and zeal is widely diffused; the churches of Christ every where rejoice in it, and hail your progress in truth and love with their warmest benedictions. Those who are near, and who know of my writing, send their fraternal salutations; and the rest would join us if it were in their power.

It has been well observed, that the number of salutations to eminent individuals introduced into

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Rome, no mention is made of Peter, who, according to the catholics, was then settled at Rome, and the proper bishop of the place; and from this it is reasonably inferred that he was not there at that time. Indeed it is far from being probable that he ever properly resided in that city."

<sup>5</sup> *A holy kiss.*] See Doddridge's note. "This mode of salutation," says Dr. Priestley in his note upon this passage, "is said to have been derived from the custom of the Jews; and was given by the men apart and the women apart; for in the synagogues the men and women always sit in separate places. Such also was probably the custom of the primitive Christians; and it is observed in many places of Christian worship at this day. The kiss of charity, as it was called, we find by early writers, was given immediately before the administration of the Lord's Supper, after the prayer which preceded it." See also Rosenmüller.

<sup>1</sup> *All the churches.*] The received text excludes the word *all*, which is admitted into the text by Griesbach upon good authority. It must, however, be taken in a very restricted sense; *q. d.* all in this neighbourhood, &c.

this epistle, constitute a presumptive proof of the genuineness of the epistle itself. An impostor could have had no inducement to encumber his letter with them; and the epistle being shown, as it probably would be, to every individual mentioned in it, each would become a voucher for its authenticity.

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Ver. 16.

The following reflections of Dr. Doddridge upon this section are so pertinent, that they require no apology for introducing them:

“ We find that some of these pious and much esteemed friends of the apostle were women, of whom he speaks with great regard as of persons whom divine grace had made very useful in the church; who had been helpers of many, and particularly of him, who had laboured, yea had laboured much in the Lord. Let not that sex, therefore, think that it is cut off from the service of Christ, because the ministry is appropriated to men. Eminently useful have many of them been. The most valuable ministers have often been assisted by them in the success of their work; while their pious care, under the restraint of the strictest modesty and decorum, has happily and effectually influenced children, servants, and young friends; yea, has been the means of sowing the seeds of religion in tender minds, before they have been capable of coming under ministerial care.”

2. The apostle cautions the believers at Rome against the artifices of designing men, who would

CH. XVI. take advantage of their unguarded simplicity, to introduce erroneous and mischievous doctrines, which would disturb the peace of the church, ver. 17—20.

Ver. 17. *Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who cause divisions and lay stumbling blocks<sup>1</sup>, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid*  
 18. *them: for such are not servants of our Lord Christ<sup>2</sup>, but of their own appetite; and by soft words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the innocent<sup>3</sup>.*

As I know something of the state of your society, though I have never had the happiness to visit you, I cannot conclude my epistle without entreating you to be upon your guard against the artifices of an enemy of which you do not appear to me to be suf-

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<sup>1</sup> *Those who cause divisions—lay stumbling blocks.*] The apostle does not expressly mention the Judaizing teachers, who probably at this time were only beginning their attempts to corrupt and seduce the believers at Rome; but he describes these hypocritical adversaries to truth and peace in terms so similar to those which he applies to the false apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, that there can be little doubt that he alludes to men of the same description. These Judaizing teachers, however, seem to have met with little success in the church at Rome; partly, as it is reasonable to believe, because of the contempt in which the Jews and their ceremonies were held by the Romans, and partly because of the seasonable cautions which the apostle suggests in this epistle. See Dr. Priestley's note on the passage.

<sup>2</sup> *Our Lord Christ.*] In the received text, *our Lord Jesus Christ*: the word *Jesus* is not found in the best copies, and is dropped by Griesbach in his last edition.

<sup>3</sup> *By soft speeches, &c.*] “*χρησολογίας, blandis verbis—εὐλογία, laus, celebratio alterius—απακός fere convenit cum ἀπλῆς in significatione, et dicitur de homine ingenuæ simplicitatis, qui nec ipse fraudibus utitur, nec aliis inesse suspicatur.*” Rosenmüller.—“by fair speeches and flattering forms of address.” Dodridge.



ficiently apprized. I have already noticed some among you who lay too great a stress upon certain legal ceremonies and distinctions; but there are others also, who, if not narrowly watched, would carry this spirit further still, and would impose upon you the whole rigour of the ceremonial institute. Those enlightened teachers who brought the gospel to you, understood its spirit too well to impose this yoke upon you; and whoever attempts to do it will introduce contention and confusion into the church, and will ensnare the consciences of weak and well meaning believers. Against such men I solemnly warn you: mark them well; avoid them; be not deceived by them. They do not show themselves at first: they talk so smoothly and so kindly, they seem quite forgetful of themselves and wholly attentive to your interest, and anxious for your salvation; so that good and well meaning persons, who, thinking no harm themselves, do not suspect evil in others, are easily taken in and deluded by them. But they are greatly mistaken in them; for these smooth-tongued teachers are not the ministers of our great Master, the true Messiah, who has never given them a commission to preach in his name: nor do they mean either to promote his interest or yours: their only object is to make gain of you, and to promote their own sordid and selfish purposes.

*For your obedience hath come abroad unto all men: I rejoice, therefore, on your account; but yet I would have you wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning that which is evil.*

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Ver. 18.

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Ver. 19.

I give you this advice because hitherto your conduct has been irreproachable ; and your proficiency in the gospel is universally celebrated. I rejoice on your account ; and I wish you to sustain your reputation, by retaining just and liberal views of the Christian doctrine, and by remaining in happy ignorance of those sad corruptions by which in other churches it has been injured and defaced.

20. *But the God of peace will speedily crush the adversary<sup>1</sup> under your feet.*

If you take warning, and steadily resist the first encroachments of this antichristian spirit, you will soon detect its imposture and subdue its power ; and God, the author and lover of peace, will give you a complete victory over it, so that it shall not be able to corrupt the doctrine of the church, nor to destroy its peace.

And this was in truth the actual state of the Roman church. Whether it might be owing to the faithful warning of the apostle, or to any other cause, it so happened, that, whatever other corruptions and errors were introduced into the church at Rome,

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<sup>1</sup> *The adversary.*] Gr. "Satan."—"bad men, the instruments of Satan : persecuting Jews." Newcome ; who refers to Le Clerc, Whitby, and Grotius. "By Satan here," says Dr. Priestley, "most interpreters suppose to be meant the Jews, who were the great adversaries of Christians at that time, and that the apostle had a view to the destruction of Jerusalem and the entire dispersion of the Jews ; as this epistle was written within eight years of the breaking out of the Jewish war. But it is perhaps more probable that he here meant all evil in general, considering this world as a state of trial, and looking forward to a better state."

free unmerited grace of God to Jew and Gentile, of the sanctifying power and comforting influence of the gospel ; of the call of the Gentiles, of the present temporary rejection and ultimate restoration of the Jews ; and of the beneficial tendency of the gospel to render all who sincerely embrace it virtuous and happy, I cannot but call upon you to unite with me in devout acknowledgements and thanksgivings to God for this new and glorious dispensation by Jesus Christ.

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Ver. 27.

To Him therefore who is able to confirm you in your adherence to that gospel, which it is my honour to be commissioned to dispense, and which is the true and only doctrine of Jesus Christ, which reveals the mystery of the invitation of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews without subjection to the yoke of the law ; a mystery which was unknown and unsuspected in former ages under the reign of the law, but which is now apparent to those who understand the true scope and meaning of the prophetic writings ; and which is still more plainly taught by those who have received a commission, from that God whose truth and mercy are unchangeable, to publish these joyful tidings to the Gentiles, for the purpose of converting them to the faith, and putting them into possession of these glorious privileges : to Him, I say, who is able to establish you in your adherence to this new and gracious dispensation ; to God, whose wisdom alone was equal to the contrivance and arrangement of this benevo-

Ch. XVI. lent scheme ; even to Him who, by the mission of  
Ver. 27. his beloved son and faithful servant Jesus Christ, has  
carried it into complete effect, to Him be ascribed  
our best and highest acknowledgements of grati-  
tude and praise, now and for ever. Amen. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The postscript to this epistle happens to be correct. The epistle to the Romans was in fact written from Corinth, by Phebe a deaconess of the church in Cenchrea ; but this postscript is not to be found in the earliest and best manuscripts : and in general the postscripts to the epistles are of no authority whatever.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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